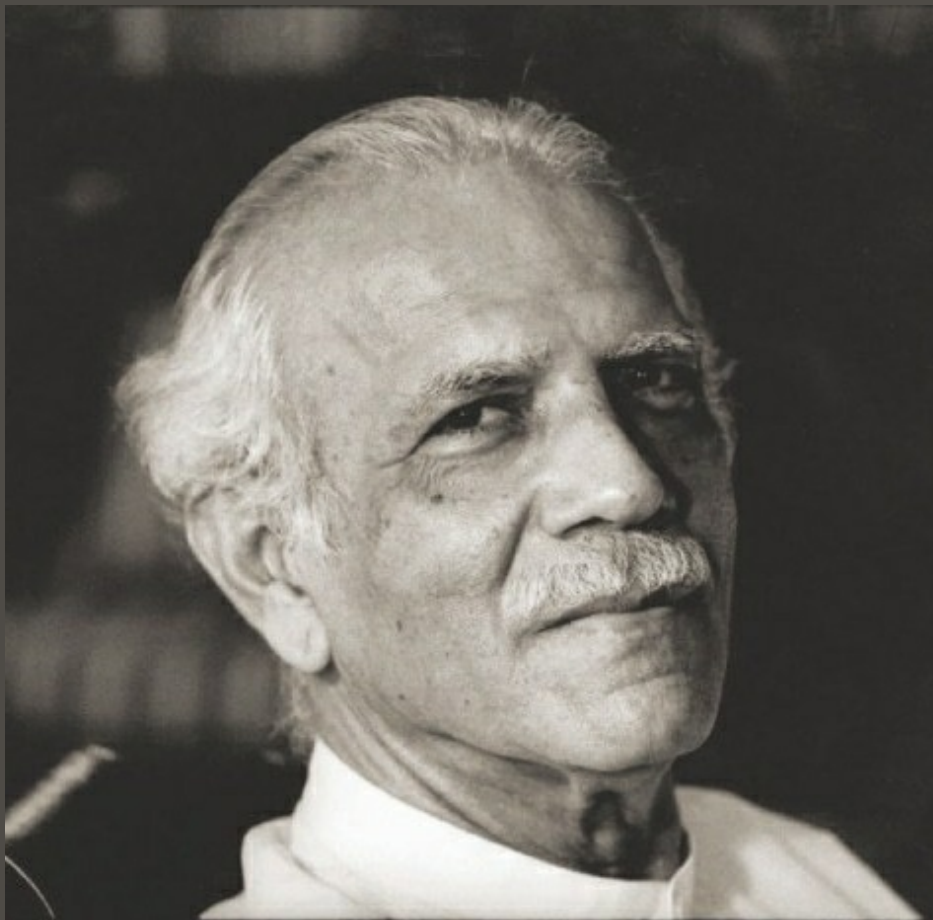


A JOURNEY TO DISILLUSIONMENT

Sherbaz Khan Mazari



Reproduced by
Sani H. Panhwar

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As told to Shehryar Khan Mazari

Reproduced by:
Sani H. Panhwar (2021)

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Dedication

**To the people of Pakistan-leaderless
and betrayed**

Foreword

At a gathering of journalists sometime ago, a friend of mine and I were asked to write our memoirs. The reason cited was that the both of us had first-hand knowledge of many of the events that had taken place in our country over the years. My friend, who is known for his colorful exuberance, wryly commented that he did not indulge in writing fiction. According to him all the autobiographies written so far in Pakistan had largely been exercises in 'fiction'. While my friend is well-known for making barbed quips at conventional beliefs, his humorous asides often contain a large measure of truth.

So, I have made every attempt to be as honest and candid as humanly possible. I will allow the reader to be the judge of my efforts. Like all memoirs, however, there is a degree of self-indulgence involved. It is in the very nature of my tribal inheritance to highlight my family history and heritage which I have done in the Introduction of this book. The reader is, of course, welcome to skip these details.

This book has been researched and written for me by my son Shehryar from the mass of personal detail that I provided him. Over the past two years he has spent many hours holding discussions with me, poring over my diaries, scrap books of newspaper clippings, correspondence and files of press statements, interviews and other written materials while I was constantly available for verification of any fact or detail. His finished work has been closely vetted by me, chapter by chapter. The views and opinions expressed here are my own.

I am grateful to Maisoon Hussein and Tabinda Vahidy for their prodigious effort in collating material for me about my experience during the Bhutto years. I would like to thank Tyaba Habib, who was wisely chosen by the Oxford University Press to be the editor of the manuscript. Her patience and diligence over the past two years were more than exemplary.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge forty-six years of understanding and devoted support given to me by my wife Souriya. During my political years she had to endure many inconveniences, including having her house turned into a sub-jail on several instances and on occasion having had to cope with officially sponsored armed intruders. Mention should also be made of my sons Sherazam, Shehryar and Sher Afzal as they have been unquestioningly loyal to me throughout.

INTRODUCTION

Tribal Background

The Mazaris are among one of the oldest tribes of the Baloch, and their history is closely linked to the history of the race itself.¹ In a tribal culture lineage counts for everything, and one's roots are inextricably linked with the present. Heritage invariably, and often invisibly, shapes and forms the contours of one's life.

The earliest historical reference to the Baloch was made by the Byzantine historian Procopius who placed them in the vicinity of the Caucasus mountains in the sixth century AD. The poet Firdausi also alludes to them living on the mountainous northern borders of the Persian Empire during the reign of the first Sassanian King Ardashir I (Artaxerxes) who died in AD 241. Subsequently, in the latter half of the sixth century the Persian King Naushirvan (Chosroes), according to the *Shahnama*, attacked the mountain stronghold of the Baloch and came close to annihilating them; some three hundred years later in the 900s, we find mention of them in history as holding sway in the Persian province of Kirman. Around AD 1041 the Baloch were forcibly expelled from there by the new Seljuk rulers of Iran and they migrated further east from Kirman to Seistan and settled there.

In the, early part of the thirteenth century, Mir Jalal Khan, the last ruler of all the Baloch, led the final mass migration of the Baloch from Seistan to Kech Makran. Baloch oral history states that the Mazaris were one of the original *bolaks* (or tribes) ruled by Mir Jalal Khan.² As a result of the dispute over the succession caused by Mir Jalal Khan's death, the race split with different tribes following each of the ruler's four sons. The Mazaris along with some other Baloch tribes followed the eldest son Rind who left Kech Makran and headed northwards towards the vicinity of Sibi. Thus the Mazari became one of the Rind tribes and formed part of what later became known as the Rind Confederacy. Similarly a sizeable body of Baloch left Kech Makran under the leadership of Lashar Khan, Mir Jalal Khan's second son. These Baloch would consequently become known as Lashari Baloch.

Hoth, Jalal Khan's youngest son, remained at Kech Makran and ruled over the Baloch who had chosen to remain there with him. He is my direct paternal ancestor through

¹ Mazari derives from 'Mazar', the Baloch word for tiger. Mazari means 'the tiger's offspring': M. Longworth Dames, *The Baluch Race*, Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1907, p. 18.

² The Baloch race then comprised forty-four tribes or *bolaks* (from the Turkish word for 'a band of men'). The legitimacy of all Baloch depends upon their ability to prove their lineage from these original *bolaks*.

his great-grandson Sahak.³ Sahak settled in Sindh sometime in the late fifteenth century in the town of Kashmor where he established himself as an influential person of good repute. At that time the Mazari tribe was settled in the Bhambhore hills (in present-day Marri-Bugti area) under the leadership of Bizan. The Mazari Sirdar was experiencing difficulties ruling his turbulent tribe. Bizan invited Sahak and after consulting the heads of the various Mazari clans and in recognition of Sahak's highborn Baloch lineage, offered him the Sirdari of the tribe. Sahak accepted the offer and cemented his bonds by marrying Bizan's only daughter. Ever since then my family, the direct descendants of Sahak, have been the Sirdars of the Mazari tribe for the past five hundred years.

In 1555 a large body of Baloch accompanied Humayun to Delhi to help wrest his throne back from the heirs of Sher Shah Suri.⁴ After the successful restoration of the Meghan dynasty on the battlefield of Panipat, the grateful Mughal gave *jagirs* to the Baloch combatants. Many small settlements of Baloch exist, even to this day, in parts of Punjab and elsewhere, in areas not normally associated with the Baloch. Over a period of four hundred and more years, all these scattered Baloch settlements gradually lost their language and culture ties, thereby abandoning their tribal identity. Unlike many of the other Baloch tribes, apart from a small section settled in Jhang, the Mazaris chose to leave the plains and return to their home in the hills of Balochistan and continue with their traditional nomadic existence. Over half a century later *Ain-i-Akbari*, the noted sixteenth century historical work, mentions them as residing in the mountains near Sibi and refers to their ability to raise 1000 cavalymen and praises the quality of their horses.⁵

During Akbar's time the Mughals gained direct control of Sindh and Jahangir conquered Kandhar by 1607. However, despite the Mughal rule its writ was not always strong in the mountainous tribal area between the plains of Sindh and distant Kandhar. In the *Mazhar-i-Shahjani*, Mir Yusuf Mirak, the Mughal historian of Sindh, describes the region of Sibi, where the Mazaris were then based, by stating: 'If the [Mughal] army is strong, the revenue administration is also good; but if the army is weak, the revenue is also slender ... In short, Sibi is surrounded by numerous nomadic tribes. [And] if a brave and resourceful person is appointed there, he will find ample chances of exhibiting his valour'.⁶ The Mughal administration was primarily engaged in collecting revenue for Delhi. Day to day administration was largely left to the chiefs of the various tribes, providing of course that none of the revenue-rich settled area was interfered with.

³ My ancestor Sahak had a brother named Punnu, who achieved lasting folklore fame as a result of his romantic entanglement with Sassi. Both Sahak and Punnu were the sons of Mir Ali, ruler of Kech Makran.

⁴ Sir Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 1883, (Reprinted by Sang-e-M Publications, Lahore, 1994).

⁵ Abu'l Fazl Allami, *Ain-i-Akbari*, volume II, translated from Persian by H. S. Jarrett, Royal Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1949, p. 339.

⁶ M. Saleem Akhtar, *Sind Under the Mughals*, (Translation of the second half of Yusuf Mirak's *Mazhar-i-Shahjani*), National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Islamabad, 1990, p. 151-2.

Settled in the mountainous tracts near Sibi and in keeping with their warlike nature, the Mazaris travelled great distances to carry out raids, which at times took them as far westwards as Kalat and at other times southwards into lower Sindh. Henry Pottinger stated that in the 1600s the Governor of Kalat (whose rule was then confined only to Jhalawan hills and Mastung valleys) was

... at length obliged to invite to his aid the mountain shepherds with their leader, against the encroachments of a horde of depredators from the western parts of Mooltan, Shikarpoor, and Upper Sinde, who headed by an Uffghan chief, with a few of his followers, and a Rind Belooche tribe still famous for its robberies, called the Muzarees, infested the whole country, and even threatened to attack the seat of government.⁷

These 'mountain shepherds' who were invited to assist the ruler were the Kumbrani Brauhis; their chief, Kumbar Khan Brauhi, was the direct ancestor of the later Ahmedzai Khans of Kalat. This account suggests that the Mazaris had an indirect hand in establishing the Ahmedzai dynasty at Kalat.

Their raids took the Mazaris far south as well. In the mid-sixteenth century, a Magsi Chief named Nindav having been driven out by the Chandiyahs, a Baloch tribe, then settled in the Mughal District of Sehwan, took refuge with the Mazaris and sought their help. The Mazari luskars went south to Sehwan and attacked the Chandiyahs. In the resulting battle both the Mazari and the Chandiyah Sirdars were slain. Coincidentally, the Mughal historian Yusuf Mirak, writing in those times, suggested that one way of subduing the troublesome Chandiyahs of Sehwan was to force them to leave their native land and 'take up residence in the region of Siwi and Gajabah', where, according to him, 'the nomads of those parts, who entertain an instinctive hostility towards these wretches, will destroy and ruin them'.⁸ Quite possibly the 'nomads' Yusuf Mirak was referring to were the Mazaris.

In the following generations countless battles were fought, and many a chief lost his life. It was not uncommon for the Sirdars to die in battle. A part of the Sirdar's duty involved heading his tribe into battle. Unlike modern day generals, the Sirdar had to lead by example. In this manner they gained the respect and loyalty of their tribesmen and bound the tribe around them.

After Aurangzeb's death the Mughal empire fell into decay as rival claimants fought it out for the throne. There was a lengthy period of confusion and strife. Taking advantage of the changed circumstances by the 1720s the Mazaris occupied the fertile

⁷ Lieutenant Henry Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sinde*, Longman London, 1816, p. 276.

⁸ M. Saleem Akhtar, *Sind Under the Mughuls*, op. cit.

riverfed southern plains in the area near present-day Rajanpur. Over a century later when the British began documenting land ownership, the Mazari chief's ownership of the Mazari Tuman would be legally recognized and entered in the land register as being based on 'the right of conquest'.⁹

After Nadir Shah's assassination Ahmed Shah Abdali established himself in Kabul as the king of Afghanistan. Later, in recognition of Nasir Khan Brauhi's active participation in the defeat of the Marathas in the Third battle of Panipat, Ahmed Shah bestowed a jagir on the Khan of Kalat in 1758. The jagir consisted of a land grant which included Shalkot (modern day Quetta) and the HarandDaji area which lay to the north of the Mazari border.¹⁰ While the Mazaris continued to maintain their independence from all outsiders, the Khan of Kalat, had by this time managed to conquer the neighbouring Marri and Bugti territories. He now endeavored to impose his authority on the Mazaris as well. The Khan's forces took possession of the plains and drove the Mazaris back to the mountains. In the battle that took place Gulsher Khan, the Sirdar of the Mazaris, was killed by the Brauhi army of Kalat. The tribe was confined to the hills and reduced to great hardship until Gulsher's son and successor, Shah Ali Khan, gathered all his men and attacked the Brauhi camp at Kashmor and successfully drove out the invaders.

A few years later, during the Sirdari of Hamal Khan in, the Kalati forces made yet another attempt to annex the Mazari country. The Brauhi army was this time aided by the Bugtis under their Sirdar Bivaragh I. Mir Hamal and his men attacked the combined Brauhi Bugti force which 'was completely routed and [the two Kalati generals], Mihan Khan and Sanjar Khan, were killed'.¹¹ That ended the last attempt by the Khans of Kalat to interfere with Mazari independence.

After the forced departure of the Kalati Brauhis, Mir Hamal Khan perceived the wisdom of aligning himself with the neighboring Talpur Mirs of Sindh. Accordingly, in 1791, Mir Hamal Khan formed an alliance with Mir Sohrab Khan, the Talpur Amir of Khairpur and a formal treaty was entered into whereby the Mazari territory would join Sindh as an autonomous territory. In return the Talpurs pledged to defend the Mazaris from all future invasions. Under the same treaty Mir Hamal retained complete control of the administration and revenues of the Mazari area. A historian of the later British period would acknowledge that 'though nominally subject to the Ameers of Sindh [the

⁹ The exact wording in the Rojhan Tehsil land records reads *ba zaria-e-shamsheer* (by right of the sword).

¹⁰ When the Khan of Kalat refused to accept the gift of *jagir*, Ahmed Shah Abdali pressed upon him to accept it as a 'shawl' for his mother, hence the original name of Shalkot. Later it became more commonly known as Kot. From Kot, during the British period, it became Kwetta and then finally Quetta.

¹¹ Griffin and Massey, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore. 1909, vol. II, p. 337.

Mazaris] were too unruly to be amenable to control'.¹² Soon the Mazaris were plunged into largely successful battles against the Bugtis, Drishaks, Gurchanis, and Legharis before the appearance of a more formidable enemy.

In 1819, the new ruler of Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh annexed Dera Ghazi Khan, but despite the changed circumstances the Mazaris continued 'to carry their depredations alike into Sindh, Lahore and Bahawalpur'.¹³ In 1834 the Mazari made raids on a nearby Sikh fortress and attacked Mithankot, looting the Sikh-held town. In 1835 a large Sikh army retaliated by invading the Mazari territory and devastating the countryside. Angered, the Mazaris avenged themselves by attacking Mithankot once again. K. Thairani, an Indian historian, writing about 1835 comments that the 'predatory tribe of Mazaris, notorious for their lawless habits and inhabiting a no man's land between Punjab and Sind, ... carried out daring raids into the Maharajah's territory'.¹⁴ Mohan Lai Kashmiri, a well-known traveler and British scout who visited Rojhan in early 1836, mentions that the Mazaris had a fighting force of 12,000 against the Sikhs, a third of which could be raised at any one time.¹⁵ Shortly after Mohan Lai's visit the Sikh Governor and Prince Kharak Singh (Ranjit's son) led a Sikh army and invaded the Mazari territory. This time they captured Rojhan, the Mazari tribal seat. Two months later the Sikhs captured the Mazari fort at Kin, inflicting heavy losses. The Sirdar, Mir Bahram Khan and his men were forced to take shelter in the nearby hills. In March 1837 Sir Alexander Burnes mentions a chance meeting with Mir Bahram Khan at the Court of the Mirs of Khairpur and describes him as 'evidently a man of sense and judgement', but he criticizes the Mazaris for their 'plundering disposition' and refers to them as 'the pirates of the Indus'.¹⁶ The British had a strategic interest in controlling the Indus and the Mazaris were regarded as an unnecessary obstacle in the British pursuit of this policy.

On the intervention of the Talpur Amirs of Sindh peace was made according to which Mir Bahram Khan and his Mazaris were forced to acknowledge the supremacy of the Sikh ruler. Mir Bahram visited the Durbar at Lahore on Ranjit Singh's invitation and met him. Later in the same year (1837) the Mazari's were in open rebellion desperately trying to shake off the foreign Sikh yoke. Mir Bahram Khan had gathered his tribesmen along with Maulvi Nasiruddeen who had been sent by his uncle, the famous ghazi, Ahmed Shah Behrelvi to help fight the Sikh invaders.¹⁷ The comparatively sophisticated Sikh army, with its trained cavalry and modern artillery which was manned by Punjabi Muslims and commanded by Abdur Rehman, proved to be too powerful. Defeated once

¹² Muhammad Yasin, 'The Mazaris of Sind', Historical Society Paper, 1939 (cited in: *Sindh Observed*, edited by Mubarak Ali, Gautam Publishers, Lahore, 1993, p. 276).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kala Thairani, *British Political Missions to Sind*, Indus Publication, Karachi 1981, p. 86.

¹⁵ Mohan Lai, *Travels in Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan*, W. H. Allen and Co., London, 1846. p. 426.

¹⁶ Sir Alexander Burnes, *Cabool*, London, 1841, pp. 47-8.

¹⁷ Behrelvi was later betrayed by a Yusufzai and killed by the Sikhs at Balakoy.

more, the Mazari forces suffered heavy casualties. The Sikhs recaptured Rojhan and this time burnt it to the ground. When Ranjit Singh heard of the victory, according to his court chronicler Sohan Lai Suri, he ordered the discharge of the Lahore *Topkhana* guns in celebration.¹⁸

Mir Bahram Khan, who was a brave and tragic figure in my family history, died a broken man soon after. He was succeeded by his son Mir Dost Ali. Soon after his accession, Mir Dost Ali once more broke into open revolt against the Sikhs. He attacked Rojhan hoping to recapture it but Governor Sahwan Mai marched against him in force and the Mazaris were forced to retire. It was only after Sahwan Mai's death in 1844 that a semblance of peace returned to the Mazari territory. The Diwan's son and successor, Mul Raj, wishing to strengthen his position against his rivals, sought Mir Dost Ali's support by making peace with the Mazaris.

It was during Mir Dost Ali's time that Mir Sher Muhammad, the last remaining Talpur Mir, took refuge with the Mazaris after the British defeated him at the battle of Dabo in 1843, which sealed the fate of Sindh. He spent several months as a guest with Mir Dost Ali in Rojhan before departing for the Sikh Durbar at Lahore. As a gesture of affection for his guest Mir Dost Ali named his only son, my grandfather-who was born shortly afterwards-Sher Muhammad. Mir Sher Muhammad fathered two sons, one of whom was my father, but unfortunately he died at a relatively young age.

By the time the British took over the Punjab the Mazaris had suffered much at the hands of the Sikh army. Most of their countryside had been devastated, their towns of Rojhan and Kin burnt and leveled and much more importantly, they had lost a large number of their fighting men. According to tribal ballads only 144 men remained unscathed in a tribe whose warriors had numbered in their thousands. Mir Dost Ali, my great-grandfather, had himself been severely wounded in one of the battles. At one stage his wounds were so critical that it was widely reported that he was dead. When Mohan Lai heard these reports he lamented. This young man was the most clever, civil, brave and sober in disposition among the whole tribe of the Mazaris'.¹⁹ Sadly, Mir Dost Ali Khan spent the remainder of his life in agony from wounds that never healed properly. In my childhood, I was often told that his body was covered with a mass of sword scars. According to my grandmother, Mir Dost Ali Khan also had a musket ball embedded under his skin near his collarbone. As a little child, she told me, she would play with it while she sat on her uncle's lap.

Bedridden as a result of these injuries Mir Dost Ali withdrew from public life and passed on the management of the tribe to his younger brother, Nawab Imam Buksh Khan. In the four decades that Imam Buksh Khan directed the affairs of his tribe his

¹⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, (translated from Persian to English by V. S. Suri), S. Chand and Co., Delhi, 1961, p. 392.

¹⁹ Hari Ram Gupta, *Life and Work of Mohan Lai Kashmiri*, Minerva, 1943, p. 93.

name became a beacon far and wide. He was much admired by the British. While it is fashionable in the twentieth century to condemn anyone who maintained good terms with the British, no one should be judged in history outside the context of his own time. Imam Buksh Khan had inherited a much weakened and depleted tribe which had unlike many others bravely suffered much at the hands of the Sikhs. To revive and prosper in peace was essential in the interest of the tribe.

* * *

In recent times there has been a noticeable trend among modern Punjabi commentators to criticize the Imperial British rule without making any reference to the barbaric severity of the days of the *Sikha Shahi*. Unlike the British the Sikhs had actively proscribed the freedom of worship for the Muslims of the Punjab; the *azaan* was banned and the eating of beef was punishable by death. Furthermore, thousands of Muslim Punjabi girls were subjected to sexual servitude by the Sikhs. In Lahore the Badshahi mosque was turned into an arsenal (then known as the *Baroodkhana*), and Emperor Jahangir's Tomb was used as a stable. The Muslims regarded the Sikhs rulers of Punjab as cruel oppressors. It is also likely that the vast number of Muslims of those times would have openly welcomed the arrival of the British into the Punjab. As a recent historian stated:

The Muslims had suffered persecution and oppression under the Sikh rule. Therefore, they regarded the British, as saviours who had provide them with security, safety and protection.²⁰

To many Muslims the British had arrived as liberators as they brought an end to the dreaded reign of *Sikha Shahi*. Aliens the British may have been but they were looked upon as being *Ahle Kitab* to the majority of Muslims of those days. More importantly, Muslim girls of Lahore were now safe again, mosques were no longer violated, and the *azuan* was once more heard from the minarets of Punjab.

It is an embarrassing fact of history for the Punjabi Muslims to recall the ease with which they accepted the domination of Punjab by the Sikhs. With a few notable exceptions the Muslims of Punjab were exceptionally quick to serve their new masters loyally and even to the extent of taking up arms against other Muslims to help serve the interests of their new Sikh rulers. Among the notable exceptions, none was more outstanding then Nawab Muzaffar Khan Sadozai, the Afghan Governor of Multan. His great valour is worthy of remembrance. Between 1802 and 1817 the Nawab repulsed seven attacks on Multan by the Sikhs. In 1818 facing defeat in the eighth and final attack, the brave white-bearded Nawab, and his sons found themselves surrounded by a large party of Sikhs. Scorning surrender, the Nawab and his sons demanded the right

²⁰ Zarina Salamat, *The Punjab in the 1920s*, Royal Book Company, Karachi 1997, p. 8.

to die in combat with swords in their hands. Instead the Sikhs shot them down from a safe distance, killing the Nawab and five of his sons.

While central Punjab yielded easily to the Sikh yoke there were those such as the Sials of Jhang and the Kharrals who put up brave resistance before being overwhelmed by the invaders. In the Dera Ghazi Khan area the Baloch tribes of Khosa and Gurchanis courageously fought against the Sikhs, while others, including the Legharis co-operated with them. The Gurchani Sirdar, Bijar Khan, proved a worthy foe of the Sikhs. According to Griffin, 'he became a terror of the country up to Multan'.²¹ Sadly, when he was eventually caught by the Sikhs they handed him over to the Legharis who slew Bijar Khan outside the gates of Multan. It was Sirdar Kaura Khan Khosa and his men who defeated the Sikhs, capturing Dera Ghazi Khan in 1848. When the British took possession of Dera Ghazi Khan the old Baloch allies of the Sikhs were among the first to pledge their loyalties to the new masters.

There is an amusing anecdote told about a well-known Muslim administrator of western Punjab during the Sikh rule, whose area of governance once extended from Rawalpindi and Jhelum and went all the way south to Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu.²² One evening the retired gentleman heard an unusual sound emanating from his village. Surprised by its intensity the elderly gentleman cupped his ear and barked at one of his retainers 'What's that? What's that peculiar sound I hear?' Bemused the man replied with a stutter, 'Sir, that's the *aazan*.' You know the Sikh rule has ended. The British have allowed the *aazan* to be heard once more.' The old man stared at him sullenly and snapped back, 'Of course you bloody fool I know the Sikh rule is over', he said. 'But I am still alive! Surely the villagers could have respected my feelings'.

* * *

Imam Buksh Khan was a visionary. He was the first to recognize that the constant and anarchic inter-tribal warfare among the Baloch was a source of great weakness for the whole race. He worked hard to bring about peace among the warring tribes but at the same time kept a sword handy to ensure justice prevailed. In Massey's *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, he is referred to with much praise.

He has never allowed self-interest or partisanship to stand in the way of justice, and the general recognition of his integrity has given him enormous influence not only with the Bilochis in generally, but among all classes of the population, Mussalman and Hindu. Crime is severely dealt with and good order enforced, his word being law to his people, who have entire faith in his justice Every

²¹ Griffin and Massey, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, vol. II, op.cit., p. 364.

²² The retired governor was Malik Fateh Khan Tiwana, who died in 1848.

aspect of his character is admirable, his bearing; of kindly and sympathetic ways: gentle in disposition; but in purpose and action as strong as iron.²³

The British were grateful to Nawab Imam Buksh Khan for his help in resolving the Khan of Kalat's dispute with his own Brauhi chiefs in the 1870s. Imam Buksh Khan also used his considerable influence over neighboring Baloch tribes to their longer term benefit. He persevered upon the Marri and Bugti to maintain peaceful relations with the British. He also helped resolve a succession dispute among the Legharis over their Tumandari and in the *Jirga* decision exiled the rival claimants from Choti. More importantly for Imam Buksh Khan, he ushered in a period of peace and justice which the Mazari tribe had not known after many decades of warfare. It is this last act of his which he should be remembered for. born in into an era where the Mazaris were not only at war with all their neighbors but had taken on the powerful Sikh Kingdom of Punjab, he left behind him a legacy of peace and formidable justice to those to whom he owed his loyalty, his tribe. Despite criticism made of him by some present-day self-styled nationalists, Imam Buksh Khan towers over other Baloch figures of his period, unlike many past and present Sirdars he served his tribe loyally and put their interest above all else. Not surprisingly the British chose to honor him on several occasions. Imam Buksh Khan was the President of the Inter-Provincial Tribal Jirga of Baloch Sirdars and also a member of the Legislative Council of Punjab.²⁴ In 1888 he was given a knighthood.

On a more personal level I have other reasons to admire Imam Buksh Khan, who was also my great-grand father, as his daughter was my paternal grandmother. On Mir Dost Ali's death the Sirdari nominally passed onto his son, my grandfather Mir Sher Muhammad Khan, who was not only Imam Buksh Khan's nephew but his son-in-law as well. Despite British efforts to the contrary, Imam Buksh Khan refused to accept the Sirdari formally for himself. Later on the death of Mir Sher Muhammad Khan in 1883 Imam Buksh recognized Mir Sher Muhammad Khan's son, the six year-old Mir Dost Muhammad Khan, as the next Mazari Sirdar. During this period Imam Buksh Khan was at the peak of his power and wielded considerable influence far beyond the boundaries of the Mazari country. He could easily have withheld the Sirdari from his daughter's son Dost Muhammad and kept it for his own male heirs, a common enough desire among the Baloch. But this was not acceptable for a just and noble man such as him.

* * *

Originally the Baloch tribal society was more democratic in structure. Strict rules of primogeniture did not always apply. If an eldest son was not equipped with leadership qualities, then the seniors of the tribe often opted for someone else within his family

²³ An extract from the 1st edition of Massey's *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, (cited in: *Gazetteer of the Dera Ghazi Khan District 1893-97*, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1898, p. 75).

²⁴ This was when both the Delhi area and the NWFP were part of Punjab.

who was judged to be more able and competent. Unfortunately, these earlier practices changed with the passage of time. Today, Sirdari reflects many of the ugly features of feudalism rather than the more open mores of a tribal society. The modern Sirdar does not sit on a *kilim* laid on the ground in the traditional manner, surrounded with his tribesmen, instead he perches himself on a raised chair imposing his authority on the people seated on the floor. Rather than lead his followers by setting examples of bravery, fortitude and justice, his modern counterpart often displays his opulent wealth and arrogance as a mark of his superiority.

There is a marked absence of abuse words in Balochi. Perhaps the worst insult available in the Baloch language is that of calling someone a 'coward' or threatening 'to pull his beard off.' Naturally these terms only applied to men. The traditional Baloch attitude towards women is one of great respect. Even in rage, a man could not lay a hand on a woman, while any act of molestation or assault was regarded as the most abhorrent of crimes and punishable by death. During battle it was customary for the womenfolk to tend to the wounded and offer water to the warring parties without favor. They could wander among the fighting men without fear. During internecine blood feuds it was often women who would make peace by going bareheaded to their family rivals and plead for reconciliation. According to Baloch custom no man can refuse a request made by a woman who approaches him with her head uncovered. Once her demand has been met it is incumbent upon the patriarch of the rival faction to 'restore' the woman's dignity by placing a *sari* or *dupatta* over her head before she is returned to her family.

Normally women had no role to play in a tribal society other than a domestic role within the confines of her family. There are of course exceptions to every rule. My grandmother Jannat Begum was an extraordinary exception. My grandfather, Mir Sher Muhammad died at an early age leaving Jannat Begum widowed at the age of twenty four. She proved to be a particularly capable lady. Her advice was often sought by her own father, Nawab Imam Buksh Khan who visited her daily. This practice was later continued by her brother Nawab Bahram Khan who met her every morning for breakfast.

My grandmother ran an open kitchen daily, or *lungar*, where food was provided to all those who came. Meals were also provided by her to all the students at the local school, the inmates of Rojhan jail, the patients and their attendants at the local hospital.²⁵ She maintained a list of needy and deserving people to whom money was regularly distributed whose names were constantly being entered on a list. As a widow she refused to maintain *pardah*, insisting that by right of her being a Sirdar's wife all tribesmen were her children and she their mother. She held her own *darbar* and settled many of the disputes herself.

²⁵ The *lungar* continued for nearly ninety years until the Land Reforms of 1959 shrank the landholdings of the Chief family.

A more lasting legacy of hers are the durbar hall (*Mirri*), the mosque, the family tombs and guest houses that she had constructed. Craftsmen were brought over from Multan and Ajmer to build these buildings. The work in the durbar hall, with its beautifully painted wooden ceilings, is till today-over a hundred and twenty years later a pleasure to behold. In fact Nawab Shahbaz Khan Bugti was so impressed by the Mazari Sirdar's *Mirri* that he asked his friend Nawab Bahrain Khan's assistance in constructing one for himself at Dera Bivaragh (as Dera Bugti was then called). Local craftsmen from Rojhan were then selected and later sent to build a durbar hall for the Bugti chief.

Along with women, young children and members of minority communities also enjoyed full protection. Hindus were considered *amanat* and had the protection of the whole tribe. Consequently, any act of violence against a non-Muslim would be regarded as an insult and avenged by the tribe. Baloch boys under the age of twelve wore ankle length *cholos*. This prevented them from becoming innocent victims of any ongoing vendetta. It was only when they reached thirteen that they were allowed to don *shalwars* and carry swords.

Unfortunately many of these proud traditions have been left by the wayside. Most of the blame lies with the recent Sirdars and the poor examples set by them. The British practice of bestowing titles and wealth upon them had done much to corrupt their tribal ideals. Instead of maintaining their positions by the constant care and welfare of their people they instead began to vie for power and patronage from the rulers. Modern education instead of instilling the notions of justice and democracy has created a chasm between the privileged and non-privileged. The practices of feudalism have taken over. The younger Sirdars of today tend to be more intolerant and despotic than the untutored Sirdars of yesteryear who were familiar with tribal codes of behavior. These educated Sirdars are inclined to forcefully subjugate their tribesmen unnecessarily, not understanding that the more they brutalize their people the less influence they will have over them in the future.

* * *

The British shrewdly adopted the old Mughal methodology when it came to dealing with the Baloch Sirdars. Earlier the Mughals had devised a special policy when it came to dealing with Baloch tribes and their chiefs. As a historian noted:

Once the imperial [Mughal] government had exacted military service or money from the Baloch chiefs, it left them free to manage their internal affairs as they wished. The Baloch population never went against their tribal laws. No complaints made to the Imperial Court by the subjects of any Baloch chief are on

record. They were free to levy cesses and duties on trade passing through their territories at rates fixed by themselves.²⁶

Despite his good relationship with the British, Nawab Imam Buksh Khan kept his independence from them throughout. A large part of the Mazari country remained outside the jurisdiction of the British rulers and was designated as tribal area where only *jirga* laws could apply. Even in the settled area the Nawab retained magisterial powers and administered the affairs of the tribe independently. During the first Hur uprising in Sindh the Nawab exercised his independence and refused a British request to provide a Mazari *lushkar* to suppress the movement despite offers of wealth. Instead it was his friend the Bugti Chief, Nawab Shahbaz Khan, who later sent five hundred horsemen under his son Mehrab Khan to fight the Hurs. The Bugti chief was rewarded by the British who presented him with thirty-five thousand acres of rich fertile land in Sangar, which until the discovery of natural gas at Sui, remained the mainstay of Bugti wealth.

Nawab Sir Imam Buksh Khan died in 1903. The British recognized his eldest son Nawab Bahram Khan as his successor to the *jagir*. His sister's son, my paternal uncle, Mir Dost Muhammad Khan continued to be the nominal Turnandar and Sirdar of the Mazaris. Undoubtedly, Bahram Khan was another remarkable man. While not quite in the unique class of his father, Nawab Bahram Khan made a considerable impact in his own way. A former member of the Indian Political Service, Sir Terence Creagh Coen, writing in 1971 about the northwest frontier of British India stated that '[Imam Buksh Khan] and his son were two of the greatest of all frontier chiefs'.²⁷ The subsequent 1909 edition of *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab* also described the younger Nawab in similar praiseworthy terms:

Nawab Sir Bahram Khan has won a prestige in his Tuman and in the neighboring districts in no degree inferior to that which his father enjoyed. His services are sought outside his Tuman and in other districts in the settlement of tribal and intertribal disputes: the Jacobabad authorities regularly invite him to attend their Jirgas. He keeps himself well in touch with the world affairs and never spares himself in the work of the Tuman which he has completely in hand.²⁸

From 1908 onwards Bahram Khan was President of the Punjab Chiefs Association and by 1910 he was a member of the Punjab Legislative Council. He was made Knight of the British Empire (KBE) in 1913 and six years later, in 1919, he was nominated to the Council of State at Delhi. Edwin Montagu states in his book that Bahram Khan was one of the people he consulted during his official visit as Secretary of State for India to Delhi

²⁶ Professor Humaira Faiz Dasti, *Multan, A Province of the Mughal Empire (1525-1751)*, Royal Book Company, Karachi, 1998, p. 249.

²⁷ Terence Creagh Coen, *The Indian Political Service*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1971, p. 154.

²⁸ Griffin and Massey, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 339.

in 1917, before helping frame what later became known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. He described Bahram Khan as 'a fine old Balochi, who could not speak a word of English' and had to use the services of an interpreter to communicate with him.²⁹

During his lifetime Bahram Khan held several noteworthy offices. He was the Life President of the Interprovincial Chief sJirga at Fort Munro which was responsible for settling all Baloch inter-tribal disputes. Thisjirga convened twice a year and dealt with cases of dispute between different tribes, often involving more than one province. The members were all tribal chiefs and their decisions, like decision of a superior court, formed precedents and were treated with great respect. Other members included Sirdars of the Baluchistan tribes, such as the Bugtis, Marris, Khetran, and the Pathan tribes, as well as the Dera Ghazi Khan tribes, such as the Khosas, Legharis, Gurchanis, and Drishaks, among others.

Bahram Khan encouraged the younger men of his family to obtain good education and lead useful lives. Among his nephews Major Hamidullah Khan, an Aligarh graduate, obtained a King's Commission in the Baloch Regiment. Another nephew, Wali Muhammad, joined the Railways. There were others in the family who entered the provincial civil service; one even joined the police.

After the death of my grandmother and towards the end of his life Nawab Bahram Khan and my uncle, Mir Dost Muhammad Khan entered into a protracted dispute. My uncle who was the nominal Tumandar and the traditional head of the tribe resented the fact that as the tribal chief he had no source of funds other than the stipend handed out to him by his maternal uncle, Nawab Bahram Khan, who remained trustee of the Chief family's property.

During a trip to Lahore while visiting some of his nephews who were studying at Aitchison College he met Maulvi Karamat Ali, who happened to be an Assistant House Master at the College. Impressed by Maulvi Karamat Ali he invited him to become his private secretary to supervise a civil court case my uncle had brought against Nawab Bahram Khan. Maulvi Karamat Ali declined as he had already accepted an offer to become a tutor to the ruler of Bahawalpur and instead suggested Choudhry Rahmat Ali, who was then employed as a tutor at the school and who is now better remembered for having coined the name 'Pakistan'.

In Lahore Mir Dost Muhammad Khan provided his new Private Secretary with a well-furnished bungalow complete with domestic staff and a salary of seven hundred rupees. This monthly salary, according to Choudhry Rahmat Ali's biographer, was 'a handsome amount in those days'.³⁰ It was sufficient to allow him to attain 'a lifestyle of

²⁹ Edwin Montagu. *An Indian Diary*, Heinemann, London, 1930, p. 50.

³⁰ K. K. Aziz, *Rahmat Ali: A Biography*, Vanguard, Lahore, 1987, p. 9.

an upper middle-class bachelor ... He became a member of the Lahore Association club and made expensive purchases: a new Humber bicycle, an eighteen-carat gold wristwatch and other good things of life'.³¹ For his frequent visits to Rojhan my uncle built him a spacious house on an open plot of land, which even to this day is referred to in Rojhan as 'the Secretary House'.

Rahmat Ali is remembered by those who knew him at Rojhan to be a rather serious man lacking a sense of humor. He was a strong advocate of Pan-Islamism and even managed to convert one of my family members, who was a graduate from the Muslim University at Aligarh and a supporter of the Indian Congress, to the cause of Pan-Islamism. Choudhry Rahmat Ali stayed often at Rojhan between 1919 and 1928. Mir Dost Muhammad Khan won his case in 1929. As K. K. Aziz, Rahmat Ali's biographer states, 'Once the case was over, the grateful Mazari chief paid Rahmat Ali a very large amount of money as appreciation of his services'.³² Rahmat Ali was then able to travel to England and complete his education at Cambridge University.

Pakistan owes a great deal to the early visionaries of a Muslim State in the subcontinent. Rahmat Ali was ahead of his time. When he approached the Indian delegates for the 1930-1931 Round Table Conference at London they scoffed at his views and regarded him an idealistic dreamer. Much later in 1948 he visited Pakistan. I was still at school but he met with my brother and other members of my family present in Lahore at Faletti's Hotel where he was staying. By then he had become a bitter man. During his visit to the country that he had named and dreamed of many years ago, he was being hounded at every turn by the CID and was deliberately made to feel unwelcome by the Government of the day. He accused the leaders of the Pakistan Movement of indulging in a sell-out. Dispirited, he left for England never to return. He died there in 1951.

On Nawab Sir Bahram Khan's death in 1923, my uncle Nawab Mir Dost Muhammad Khan was recognized as the sole and paramount chief of the Mazaris. He was to die within a decade and is largely remembered as the *Mir Sakhi*. My uncle's generosity and charity reached legendary proportions. There are many stories recounting the excesses of his generosity, and I should perhaps relate one. Once while riding on horseback, he was approached by a fakir who said that he had travelled a great distance to benefit from the Mir's generosity. My uncle asked the fakir what would satisfy his needs. The fakir pointed towards the horse that my uncle was riding. The Mir promptly got off and handed the reins to the fakir. When one of his escorts dutifully tried to remove the solid silver saddle, stirrups and the strings of heavy silver enamelled necklaces around the horse's throat Mir Dost Muhammad angrily waved him away and insisted that it all now belonged to the fakir. Not surprisingly on his death he left a heavily indebted

³¹ Ibid., p. 10.

³² Ibid., p. 25 and note 43 on p. 2. According to some sources Rahmat Ali was paid an honorarium of Rs 200,000 - a huge amount for those days - by Mir Dost Muhammad Khan.

estate. As he died without issue, his brother, my father, Mir Murad Buksh Khan-succeeded him to the Sirdari.

My father's Sirdari lasted for only a year. He died in 1933 when I was just two and a half years old. The British government took charge of us and our property, and in an official durbar ceremony the Punjab Governor recognized my eldest brother, Mir Balakh Sher as the Turnandar of the Mazaris. Soon after, they sought to appoint a *sarbarah* (regent) tumandar. The provincial administration took meticulous care in their selection, seeking to appoint the best candidate, keeping in mind the tribal culture and its sensitivities. Three members of my family offered themselves as candidates for the *sarbarah* position and all three were rejected. One applicant, though educated and competent, was rejected because he sported a solar hat, smoked a pipe and was considered to be somewhat of a *pukkah* sahib. Another candidate, who was a senior member of the family, was excluded because he had been held responsible for ordering the murder of the husband of his mistress, as a result of which he had earlier been dismissed from the position of a magistrate. The third candidate who had been refused was a cousin of mine. Though well-educated, he was considered to be a libertine. Having rejected all the applicants the government chose Khan Bahadur Rahimyar Khan, who had not even put his name forward for the position. Rahimyar Khan not only lived in accordance with tribal traditions, he was known to be honest, upright and just. He was also made a magistrate and appointed as a member of the interprovincial tribal *jirga*. During the minority of my brothers and I, Rahimyar Khan managed the tribal affairs in our stead. Our property was placed under the management of Khan Bahadur Aurangzeb Khan, a Punjab civil service officer, who reported directly to the District Deputy Commissioner, who was our official guardian.

CHAPTER 1

Early Years

Sadly, I have no memory of my mother or father. My mother died at the young age of twenty-two, when I was just a year old. A year later my father died. Following the common practice of tribal tradition, shortly after my birth I was sent off to a wet-nurse. Muraddan was a camel breeder's wife and I lived with her and her family in a reed hut (*geydan*) for the first year of my life. They lived a nomadic life near the foothills of the Suleiman Range.

After my mother's death I was taken from Muraddan and put in the care of Sabhai who lived in Rojhan and belonged to a community of former slaves, and whose ancestors had once been slaves in my family. Sabhai was childless, and doted on me. Many years later she helped in raising my sons Sherazam, Shehryar and Sher Afzal at Karachi, and remained in my service and care until she died in 1972.

We were a family of six-three brothers and three sisters. As orphans we were all wards of court. Our official guardian was the Deputy Commissioner at Dera Ghazi Khan. Deputy Commissioners came and went, but there were one or two who took great personal interest in our welfare. Of these, George Abell, who was posted to Dera Ghazi Khan during 1939-41, was an exceptional guardian. He played a prominent role in determining our future. I continued to keep in touch with him over the years. Later in 1949 when I visited him in London, he had been knighted, and was a director of the Bank of England.³³

The British paid particular attention to our education. They insisted that my two older sisters be sent to Lahore for their schooling. This caused quite a furore amongst the tribal elders who were horrified by the thought of their Sirdar's daughters being sent away from home to a foreign place. Anxious to avoid unrest, and sensitive as they were to tribal customs, the British relented and sent instead a governess to Rojhan for their education.

When I turned seven I joined my brothers at Queen Mary's College, Lahore. It was, in fact, largely a girl's school, and only accepted boys up to the age of ten. At Queen

³³ A year later, in 1950, he became Governor of the Bank of England.

Mary's, under the guidance of the Principal, Miss Winifred Cox, great emphasis was placed upon turning the young boys of the landed aristocracy into little gentlemen. The boys owed a lot to the older girls whom we addressed politely as *bhainjee*. Conservative families still refrained from sending their daughters to school, and as a result, the girls at Queen Mary's came from the more enlightened and mostly urban families of the Punjab. These *bhainjees* taught us to recite the *kalima* and instructed us on *namaz*. This initial training by the *bhainjees* taught us at a young age to respect the female sex, and made me develop a more liberal outlook and respect the efforts of women who had tried to achieve emancipation within our closed society.

I still fondly remember a large number of the girls who were at Queen Mary's during my days there. Among them were Allama Iqbal's daughter Muneera (better known as Bano); Nazi and Sylvie, the daughters of the distinguished civil servant G. Moinuddin, and their cousin Nighat, who was later married to the much-respected Admiral Ahsan, was there as well. Among the princely families, we had daughters of the rulers of Patiala, Karputhala, Jind, and Nabha, the Sikh states of East Punjab. Also present were the daughters of Sir Sikander Hayat (Tahira and Ismat), Sir Liaquat Hayat (Samina), Sir Feroz Khan Noon (Asmat),³⁴ Sir Syed Maratab Ah (Sitwat, as well as his niece Parveen), and Mian Muhammad Khan (Attiya and her two sisters). There were many other such young ladies, too many to enumerate here, all of whom I fondly recall as the *bhainjees* of my childhood.

Among the boys who were my contemporaries there, was the son of the Amir of Bahawalpur. Others included Zulfikar and Iftikhar Bokhari from Shah Jeewna, and Saifullah Magsi who was the sole representative from Balochistan. The boys were restricted to a separate boarding house and at the 'mature' age of ten most of us were sent away to Aitchison College at Lahore.

I joined Aitchison in January 1941. Originally founded in 1886, it was set up as Chiefs College with the sole aim of providing education to the sons of the Punjab princely ruling families. A few decades later it was made less elitist by the then Principal, Mr. Barry, who opened admission to boys from wealthy and reputable business and professional families. Shortly after my arrival at Aitchison, the school celebrated a special event: its students had finally exceeded two hundred! A holiday was declared. The roll call at Aitchison then consisted largely of the children of privileged families of those days. Along with the contingent of boys from Queen Mary's College who I have already mentioned, we also had the sons of the rulers of Bahawalpur, Patiala, Karputhala, Khairpur, Jind, Nabha and Chamba. Lahore was represented by the Qizalbashes and the Baghbanpura Mians. There was also a large group of boys from rural Punjab's landed gentry. From Ferozpur there were the Mamdots; from Shahpur

³⁴ Subsequently, Feroze Khan Noon, along with a number of other knighted Muslim League leaders including Nawab Jamal Khan Leghari and Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, voluntarily surrendered their titles on the direct instructions of Mr. Jinnah.

the Tiwanas and the Noons; from Multan we had the Qureshis, Khakwanis and Gillanis. Those from my home district of D. G. Khan included a large number of Legharis (including Farooq, who later went on to become President of Pakistan) as well as my good friend Zulfiqar Ali Khosa, the orphaned heir to the Khosa tumandari. From other parts of the Punjab we had the Sials from Jhang, the Syeds from Shergarh, the Isakhels and Kalabagh Awans from Mianwali, the Hayats from Wah, the sons of the chiefs of the Ghakkar and Janjua tribes, and the son of the Pir of Makhud. From the NWFP we had the Hoti boys and the Khan of Mardan's sons (Mir Afzal and Aziz Sarfaraz) and the Wali of Swat's son. From Balochistan we had Akbar Bugti and his brother Ahmed Nawaz, Khair Buksh Marri and a number of young Jamalis. Sindh was represented by my friends Ali Murad of Khairpur, Mushtaq and Naseem Abdul Kadir, and their younger brother Irshad (their father, whom I later came to know well, remained the Dewan of Junagadh State virtually up to Partition when he is said to have nominated his deputy, Naib Dewan Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, as his successor). Among the established urban families of Lahore there was my dear friend Asad Ali, the son of Syed Amjad Ali, who remained one of my closest friends until his death in early 1999. Apart from the Muslim boys there was also of course an extremely large group of Sikh boys who all left after Partition.

Pre-Partition Aitchison had a mixture of boys of different religions and races. At school we had a mosque, a gurdwara and a temple, and despite the different beliefs, there was no hostility among the boys whatsoever. We were simply young, energetic boys who studied and played together, and made friends easily regardless of religious differences. Sports were taken very seriously at Aitchison. There were some excellent athletes and sportsmen in my days. Boys like Nazar Tiwana, Rambir Singh Bajwa, and Rai Singh of Patiala, performed wonders on the school's athletic and playing fields. Even the Baloch boys shared some sporting success. My contemporary, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, displayed remarkable talents as a cricketer, dazzling everyone with his ability. Clearly, he had the makings of an international test cricketer, if he had only chosen to pursue the sport further. His elder brother, Akbar, excelled at water polo and the shot put. My two brothers, Balakh Sher and Sher Jan, were talented swimmers and members of the First Eleven hockey team. I was later captain of the school swimming and water polo teams, and was quite proud when we beat our rivals at Government College and F. C. College in the annual collegiate competitions.

It was perhaps not a coincidence that Khair Buksh Marri, Akbar Bugti, and his younger brother Ahmed Nawaz, were there at Aitchison along with my brothers and I. We were all wards of the court, and had been sent there about the same time. The Marris, Bugtis and Mazaris were all large Baloch tribes who shared contiguous boundaries and had a long history of tribal rivalry. Not surprisingly, due to their geographical location on the cusp of three provinces, the Mazaris, unlike other Baloch tribes of Dera Ghazi Khan, had maintained a wholly Baloch tribal character. It was farsighted of the British to bring

together the future leaders of these tribes under one roof so they could forge links and try to overlook past hostilities.

Khair Buksh and I shared the same dormitory, so I got to know him well. He was shy and withdrawn, but extremely fond of clothes. He would often study his face in the mirror from all angles, and was known to be somewhat of a narcissist. The cinema was an obsession with him, as was everything connected with America. Later, he went through a transformation and became deeply religious. An intense pacifist, he would remove insects from his path so that neither he nor anyone else would step upon them. Strangely, he started partially undoing the stitching on his *shalwars* and *kameezes*. All this left those who knew him from his school days quite unprepared for his eventual change into a firebrand Marxist.

Akbar Bugti was of an altogether different mettle. Flamboyant and talkative, he would constantly be spinning colourful yarns - whether there was any truth in them, we were never quite sure - but he held us all enthralled by his stories. Later on he developed a heightened sense of machismo and began picking fights wherever he could, making him a hero in the eyes of the younger lads, in particular the Baloch boys.

In 1942 my guardian, George Abell, decided to send me to a more rigorous establishment. He chose for me the cadet school at Dehra Doon. The school was more formally known as the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College (RIMC). It had been inaugurated in 1922 during a visit to India by the then Prince of Wales, who later abdicated his throne as Edward VIII. Previously it had been known as the Imperial Cadet Corps, and catered for a few dozen ruling princes. The recommissioned school aimed to prepare its students for the Indian Military Academy, and in some cases, for Sandhurst. Its selection panel consisted of the governors of various provinces, and it was not always easy to get admission. At the relatively young age of eleven, I was interviewed by the Governor of Punjab along with some members of the Provincial Cabinet, including Sir Khizer Hayat Tiwana. The selection panel focused almost entirely on family background. My application was met with approval, and I was sent off to Dehra Doon.

I clearly recall the day I left Simla by train accompanied by Mrs. Florence Frisk, my English governess. We reached our destination on the first day of August 1942. At Dehra Doon I was greeted by Ajit Singh Shergil of Patiala, whom I already knew as he and his sisters had been with me at Queen Mary's. RIMC was totally different from what I had become accustomed to at Aitchison. The school was divided originally into three sections (as opposed to houses): Kitchener, Roberts, and Rawlinson. A new section called Wavell was added at the commencement of the Second World War catering expressly for the sons of British officers serving in India and the eastern front. The cadets were headed by the Cadet Captain, and each section was led by a section commander and his team of NCOs. The school was largely run by this team of senior

cadets. The inspection parades, the kit parades, physical training classes, sports and general discipline were entirely supervised by these senior cadets - the teachers generally restricting themselves to academics. Our principal was Mr. Scott, a distinguished looking gentleman. Then there were the senior masters - Phillips of Kitchener; Allen of Roberts; Pritchard, whom I remember as a bad-tempered tyrant, of Rawlinson; Berkeley, an Oxford Cricket Blue, of Wavell.³⁵

I joined the Kitchener section. Among the old boys of this section was General Fazle Haq who remained a dear friend of mine right until his tragic death in October 1991.³⁶ The living conditions of the cadets were quite Spartan. The grounds consisted of playing fields, the administrative block, the classroom block, and the parade ground. The dining room and the anterooms were impressive. During weekdays every evening there was a parade in which all the cadets participated dressed in their military uniforms. Sports were very much part of the daily curriculum. We had a splendid cricket pavilion, but I was a boxing fan and took up the game with great enthusiasm.

I was one of the few who opted out of joining the armed Mannock, a veteran of the First World War who wore a patch on one eye having lost it during the war. 'Cadet Mazari,' he snapped at me, 'I notice a questioning look appears in your eyes every time an order is issued. I don't care for it all.' He then said direly that if I joined the army I would either make it to the very top, or be court-martialled! Being court-martialled is not something one can take lightly. In hindsight I think my decision was a very wise one! So, these were my formative and impressionable years.

My first break with rigid conformity was at the age of fifteen. When the political campaigns commenced for the 1946 elections, I was in Rojhan on Christmas vacations from RIMC. A member of my family was contesting on a Unionist Party ticket, and all my relatives, including my elder brother the tumandar, were actively canvassing for him. I was the sole exception. Enamoured by the vision being espoused by Mr Jinnah, I went to the durbar hall and raised the green star and crescent flag of the Muslim League on the flagpole, and declared my open support for Mr. Jinnah's candidate. For my action I was severely reprimanded by the District Commissioner, Denizel Bryon.³⁷ He warned that as a minor and a ward of Court, I could not actively participate in politics. I was threatened with cancellation of my monthly allowance. The issue resolved itself by my return to RIMC at the end of the vacations. Much to my delight and to my family's chagrin, the Muslim League candidate won the elections from Dera Ghazi Khan district. My first indirect minor foray into politics had established my reputation within my family as a renegade.

³⁵ Our English teacher, Mr. Catchpole, later took up a teaching post in Pakistan and became very well-known during his years here.

³⁶ Sahibzada Yakub Khan, and generals Azam, Yusuf Afridi (Joe) and were also our seniors in this section.

³⁷ In the mid-fifties Denizel Bryon came to Pakistan as a UK trade commissioner.

Due to the impact that the armed forces have had on the history, of Pakistan, a number of cadets at RIMC later became household names. But that should not detract from the distinction some of them achieved in their careers. I have already mentioned some of the old cadets of Kitchener section-among them also was General Azam, General Yusuf, General Yakub Khan, and General Ahmed Jamal. From Rawlinson section those who came into distinction were Air Marshals Asghar Khan and Nur Khan,³⁸ General Sharma (Chief of the Indian Army), Air Chief Marshal Suri (Chief of the Indian Air Force), General Sadiq Abbasi and his three brothers, and Lieut. P. S. Bhagat who won the first Victoria Cross that was awarded to an Indian in the Second World War. Shehryar Khan of Bhopal, who later served as the Foreign Secretary was also a member of Rawlinson. His mother Begum Abida Sultana, once visited RIMC wearing a felt hat and smoking a pipe, much to the amazement of the boys. The roster at Roberts included Safdar Rashid, son of the first Chief Justice of Pakistan, Generals Gul Hassan,³⁹ Naseerullah Babar and Hari Singh, the Maharaj Kumar of Jodhpur. My best friend at RIMC was Jagat Singh Bhatti of Jasalmer.

On 14 August 1947 I organized all the Muslim cadets in Kitchener section to march past our school administrative block holding aloft an improvised Pakistani flag. Shortly afterwards I was hauled up before our adjutant who demanded an explanation for our indulgence in politics. Though Independence had not yet taken place (Dehra Doon being in India), I pointed out to him that we were celebrating the birth of our new nation across the border which had already come into existence a few hours earlier. To his credit, the adjutant smiled and withdrew the charge of 'indulging in politics' laid against us. Apart from myself, these 'rebellious' marchers included generals Ahmed Kamal and Alam Jan Masood, and Air Vice-Marshal Sadruddin.

Along with a number of other Muslims, I was forced to quit RIMC in October 1947. The riots had started by then. The ones responsible for the mayhem in Dehra Doon were some of the embittered Sikh and Hindu refugees who had been forced to flee from what had become Pakistani Punjab. Attempts had been made to attack the school. One night we were suddenly woken up and told to quickly gather our bare essentials. After bidding emotional farewells to our Hindu and Sikh fellow cadets, we left Dehra Doon along with the Muslim cadets from the nearby Indian Military Academy. We had little knowledge then that our departure was going to be permanent. As there were fears that we might be attacked, we were taken by road to Saharanpur under an armed escort of Gurkha soldiers. From Saharanpur we were flown directly to Lahore. Major Tikka Khan and Captain Bilgrami, both of whom who later became generals, were in charge of the evacuation. Later, the same Tikka Khan became stuck with the sobriquet of 'The Butcher of Bengal' after the horrible debacle of 1971.

³⁸ Air Marshal Asghar Khan was the first Pakistani chief of the air force. Air Marshal Nur Khan was his successor.

³⁹ Gul Hassan succeeded General Yahya Khan as the commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army after the debacle in East Pakistan.

From Lahore I made my own way to Rojhan, our tribal headquarters. There I discovered that though the minorities in Rojhan had been protected, the same did not apply to those of some of the surrounding villages. Recent refugees from East Punjab had incited the locals to attack and burn Hindu homes. In a population of about a hundred thousand people there numbered some ten thousand non-Muslims, mostly Hindus. To help prevent further bloodshed I, then a young man of seventeen, took to riding around at night with an escort of armed men to give protection to these hapless people. I continued with this practice every night for three months until all the Hindus had been evacuated.

As a child I would occasionally accompany servants when they went to the bazaar to buy fruit and other items. One day I saw an aged poverty-stricken man, obviously a Muslim, sitting crouched on the ground while a Hindu, standing above him, carefully poured water into the man's cupped hands. I was baffled by the sight. My attendant explained that the poor man had obviously been thirsty, and his Hindu benefactor, not wanting to 'pollute' his utensils, was providing the water and the man was forced to drink from his hands. The Hindu was taking great care while pouring the water fearing that an inadvertent splash on his clothes would contaminate him. Even as a child I felt outrage at the unjustness of this act. Later as I matured I was saddened to note that these caste prejudices had been adopted by the Muslims as well.

In Rojhan, in the pre-Partition days, the non-Muslims, mostly Hindus, were very influential despite their small numbers. Most of them were traders and shopkeepers, and due to the near total illiteracy of the tribesmen and other Muslims, a number of them became *munshis* and managers of our family estates. A major cause of antagonism among the two communities related to economic disparity. Of the four hundred shops in the area, all but two were owned by non-Muslims. The Hindu *baniya* extended goods on credit which then had to be repaid with interest. It was common practice for the Hindus to obtain surety in the form of gold and silver ornaments. Now they were evacuating, and they refused to return the pledged ornaments until they had been repaid in full. The tribesmen and others feared that the Hindus would leave with their ornaments, and threatened to attack them. Faced with this new problem I called a *jirga* which was attended by the elders of all the communities. It was decided that a goldsmith would weigh each ornament and extract precious metal to the value of the sum owed by each party without taking interest into account.

The Hindus were greatly relieved by the decision, as by now they had begun to fear for their lives. They pressed me to accept gifts in appreciation, which I declined. I later learnt that on their way to Rajanpur from Rojhan, the local police instigated a mob of hoodlums who attacked their caravan - which was ironically being escorted by a detachment of Gurkha - on the border, killing about a dozen people, and plundering part of their caravan.

We soon learnt that seven young girls had also been abducted by the marauders, and taken away to remote areas. Along with a force of fifteen armed men, we set off in search of them. We found them and delivered them personally to their families in Rajanpur. I cannot forget the look in their eyes when they were reunited with their families, as they had lost all hope of seeing each other again.

A few weeks later, in one of the more remote villages, I noticed a young girl at a stream filling pots with water. She wore traditional tribal clothes, but did not look like a Baloch. When I asked her a question in Balochi, tears streamed from her eyes, and she began to tremble. An older Baloch woman appeared and began to remonstrate with me. She said the girl was her daughter-in-law and insisted that even a chief had no right to talk directly to a young Baloch girl of his tribe. I refused to budge, and asked the woman to tell her 'daughter-in-law' to talk to me. The woman tried to put me off by saying that the girl was mentally disturbed, and the shock of being addressed by a strange man had further upset her balance! But the young girl fell at my feet and begged me in Seraiki (the language spoken by the local Hindus), 'Save me from these animals.' She was barely fifteen years old.

Transcending barriers of religion and race, these gestures were remembered. During my first visit to India after Partition, a large number of Hindus from the Mazari area and D. G. Khan district welcomed my wife and I in Delhi with great warmth and affection. They led us in a procession forty miles from Delhi to Palval, where a few hundred people had collected. I was greatly touched by their sentiments when they covered me with garlands and delivered speeches recalling my efforts in recovering their daughters and providing protection to their families.

Almost half a century later, my wife and I once again visited India and stayed at the residence of the Pakistani High Commissioner in Delhi. There had been some mention in the Indian Press about my visit, and about half a dozen of these people turned up to see me despite restrictions placed by the intelligence services around the residence.

* * *

In the spring of 1948, while I was at Rojhan news reached me of oppression being carried out in Kashmir at the behest of Maharaja Hari Singh, who had unjustly entered a treaty acceding the state to India. Being seventeen years of age and filled with youthful fervor, I resolved to participate in the liberation of Kashmir and began to collect volunteers to join me. When my legal guardian the local DC, an Englishman named John Biggs Davison,⁴⁰ came to know of my venture he urged me not to go. Diplomatically, he confided to me that 'the jihad was not all that it was supposed to be'.

⁴⁰ Sir John Biggs-Davison later became a British Member of Parliament. In 1916 he visited Pakistan with a delegation of UK Parliamentarians. Over lunch he reminisced with much humor about my youthful zeal in 1948

I supposed that his advice was the result of 'fatherly' concern, so I paid no heed and proceeded to the border with my small band of armed Mazari tribesmen. At the border I was stopped by Pakistani officials who told me in clear-cut terms that I would not be allowed to cross into Kashmir. It became apparent they believed that we were intent on partaking in the plunder that was taking place across the border. It was here that I received the bitter news of the true state of affairs in Kashmir. As the Pakistani Foreign Minister of those days would later say 'The tribesmen of the frontier, ever ready to lend a hand wherever there was trouble and a chance of plunder, poured into Kashmir and soon had the Maharaja's forces on the run'.⁴¹ Instead of capitalizing on their success and pushing towards Srinagar, the tribal invasion soon dissipated into a frenzy of looting and rapine carried out under the guise of *Mal-e-Ghanimat*, much to the embarrassment of the Pakistani government. Strict border controls had now been put into place to prevent further mayhem. Stuck at the border I also came to learn that the campaign in Kashmir was proving to be a disaster as the Kashmiri Muslims had begun to turn against Pakistan because of their bitter experience at the hands of the wild tribesmen.⁴² Chastened and very disillusioned I made my way quietly back to Rojhan.

After a gap of six years, I rejoined Aitchison College in 1948. Despite changes brought about by Mr. Barry in the 1930s, the college retained its aura of elitism. The sprawling grounds, the superb collection of buildings, playing fields and the cricket pavilion would be difficult to match even in the best of schools anywhere in the world. Some of the senior boarders were provided with private rooms with attached bathrooms. We were allowed our own servants, and could keep our own horses and syces. The school also provided an excellent stable of horses for riding and field sports under the supervision of an impressive looking risaldar sahib who was responsible for teaching horsemanship to the boys. It was not surprising that Aitchison maintained an extremely high standard in riding and the related sport of tent-pegging.

During my days Mr. Gwyn was the school principal and Khan Anwar Sikander was the headmaster. In my last year, as I was the school prefect, the Principal allowed me a rather rare dispensation making me the envy of most of the school boys. I was given the special privilege to use a car, but on condition that I would not drive it within the boundaries of the school. The car, a 1948 Chevrolet convertible, would be driven through the front gate by my driver, and after leaving the compound, I would take the wheel.

I recall the then prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan visiting the school in 1949 to see his son, Ashraf. His visit took place without any display of protocol there were no outriders, fuss or protocol. Later, when Governor-General Khwaja Nazimuddin visited the

⁴¹ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Servant of God*, Unwin Brothers, UK, 1983, p. 150.

⁴² Operation Gibraltar (1965): not only did the Kashmiris largely fail collaborate or cooperate with our guerrilla force but there were instances where Pakistani-led insurgents were even handed over to the Indian military.

school as a chief guest to attend one of the college functions, it was a simple welcome devoid of pomp and ceremony.

Sir George Abell who had left India after serving as private secretary to the Viceroy Lord Wavell, kept in touch with me, and suggested that I visit England - which was recovering from the Second World War and select a university to complete my education. Though I had not completed my HSC, at Sir George's suggestion, I left for England in the summer of 1949. I spent a number of enjoyable weeks there, and visited the universities of Cambridge and Oxford. I spent several weekends at Sir George's country home at Hatfield with his family. On our way back to London, he took me to the Bank of England where he showed me the underground gold vaults. It was an edifying experience to be taken on a private tour of what was once the most powerful financial institution in the world.

Sir George insisted that I make an extensive road tour of Britain. On his recommendation I went by car to the Lake District, and further north to Edinburgh and the Scottish Highlands, finally stopping at John O'Groats. Later, once more at his urging, I travelled extensively in the beautiful countryside in the southern counties; from Kent in the east I journeyed leisurely by road westwards, eventually reaching Land's End. I recall with some amusement my former guardian telling me to avoid Brighton as it was 'quite vulgar and not a suitable sort of town for gentlemen'; instead, he suggested Torquay as an appropriate seaside venue. Sir George proved to be a marvelous mentor. He sent my introductions to a number of his friends all over England who invited me to stay at their homes during my travels. Despite the severe rationing, which had carried over from the war, the English hospitality was generous.

Under the British rule the tribal area of the district enjoyed the same rights and privileges as the tribal areas of the NWFP and the Marri-Bugti area of Balochistan. Legally, these areas had never been constitutionally part of the British Empire, and instead had been administered somewhat loosely under an agency system. In 1946-47 as a result of talks between the Khan of Kalat and Baloch Sirdars, serious consideration had been given to the possibility of the Marri-Bugti tribal area and the D. G. Khan tribal area uniting with Kalat to form a new Baloch province. After the creation of Pakistan the previous system continued with the governor of Punjab acting as the Agent to the Governor-General (previously it had been to the Viceroy) for the D. G. Khan tribal area. Surprisingly, under law the tribal area of D. G. Khan continued legally to be separate and not a part of Pakistan. As constitutional moves were being made to address this legal lacuna, Nawab Jamal Khan Leghari strongly advocated that the D. G. Khan tribal area unite with the Marri-Bugti tribal area and join Balochistan. Jamal Khan was supported by three other tumandars of the area.⁴³ My elder brother, Mir Balakh Sher,

⁴³ Jamal Khan was given a mandate by His Highness Mir Ahmed Yar Khan. Khan of Kalat, Sardar Akbar Khan Bugti Tumandar and Sirdar Doda Khan, Sarbarah Tumandar of the Marri tribe to negotiate with the British Government

who soon became the President of the Inter-Provincial Jirga, was prevailed upon by senior Punjab officialdom to oppose Jamal Khan on this issue and opt for Punjab. It was a closely contested dispute, but in the end the views of officialdom carried the day, and by a slim majority of tumandars, ensured that the tribal area stayed within the boundaries of Punjab.

In December 1949 an important event took place for the Baloch of Dera Ghazi Khan district. At a *jirga* held at D. G. Khan, the Baloch tumandars and tribal elders unanimously passed a resolution whereby the tribal area joined Pakistan. In a ceremony officiated by Governor-General Khwaja Nazimuddin, and the Punjab governor, Sirdar Abdur Rab Nishtar, the tribal area officially became part of Pakistan. In return, the Government of Pakistan promised to abide by the existing system under which the tribal area enjoyed a special status. Even today there is an absence of police, taxation and the requirement for restriction on carrying of arms in the D. G. Khan tribal area (and now with the creation of a new district, the Rajanpur tribal area as well). Instead the area continues to follow the British practice of being administered by a political assistant and a force of locally recruited Border Military Police.

* * *

After completing my HSC at Aitchison, instead of pursuing higher studies, I got involved in tribal affairs, and left for Rojhan. As a young man brimming with idealism, I thought I would try to bring about a positive change. I was concerned that the tribal society of the Mazaris was rapidly being transformed into a feudal society, and wanted to check this insidious growth. It was a highly ambitious task for one as young as I, but youth is never in short supply of excessive confidence.

For some it is difficult to distinguish between tribalism and feudalism. In a tribal culture, society binds its members, including the chief and his family, to uphold its laws and traditions; the chief is first among equals and depends solely on the loyalty and support of his tribesmen. He has no coercive authority to subjugate them. On the other hand, in a feudal society it is land and wealth and official patronage that gives a person ^preeminence in his area, which he then uses to subjugate the local populace.

Baloch culture stresses importance on three basic values: honour, valour and chivalry. By tradition a Baloch is meant to value his honour above all else including his own life; he is expected to be courageous and display fortitude, and show generosity of spirit and large-heartedness. It is a Sirdar's primary duty to set an example to his men by abiding strictly to the Baloch code of honor. It was not at all unusual for Sirdars to die in battle while leading their people, as tribal honor would be at stake. The code of bravery

on their behalf to form a new Baloch province. Nawab Jamal Khan Leghari was the grandfather of President Farooq Leghari.

imposed a duty on them to lead from the front and expose themselves to the opposing force. Chivalrous behavior meant a heightened respect for women and the weak, as they were regarded as being defenseless, and a code of hospitality under which the care for those seeking asylum was elevated to the status of a sacred duty.

There is an interesting historical incident which illustrates the effect of the chivalric code on the Baloch. In 1543 as the exiled Emperor Humayun was forlornly wandering towards Kandhar with his pitiful troop of men and women, he entered into the territory of the Magsis and set up camp in the chief's village. The Magsi Sirdar was absent at the time. Humayun's frightened sister, Gul-Badan Begum, describes the Magsis in her Humayun-Nama as 'savage Biluchis whose speech is the tongue of the ghouls of the waste'. By the next morning, Humayun and his men realized that they were prisoners as the tribesmen refused to allow them to leave until their chiefs return. Late that night the Magsi chief arrived and met with Humayun. He showed the Mughal the *farman* that he had received from Humayun's brothers Mirza Kamran, ruler of Kandahar, and Mirza Askari, requesting him to imprison the ousted Emperor and deliver him to them in return for a generous reward. The Magsi chief admitted to Humayun that he had planned to attack him and his party of men with the intention of capturing him. But now that Humayun had chosen to camp at his home village he was no longer an enemy, but had become by Baloch tradition, his honoured guest. Gul-Badan Begum writes that the Magsi Sirdar told Humayun '... now I will sacrifice my life and the lives of my family, I have five or six sons, for your Majesty's head, or rather for one hair of it. Go where you wish. God protect you!' If the Magsi chief had not been loyal to the Baloch code, the history of Mughal India might have been dramatically altered.

The rapaciousness of feudalism has done much in recent years to erode the nobility of the tribal code. When I was thirteen, an incident took place that exposed the force of feudal brutality to my youthful mind. My brothers and I had been invited to a shikar by a family elder. He owned eighty thousand acres, which after my brothers and my land holdings, made him the next biggest landowner in the area. Early one morning I was woken up by the noise of raised voices. I went outside and caught sight of an elderly *Juth*⁴⁴ (the name by which all the non-Baloch were unfortunately referred to) being pulled by his beard and being beaten by the staff of my relative. I saw the family elder sitting nearby, watching. Not being able to help myself, I shouted out, 'Why are you doing this? Isn't he human?' My relative told his men to stop the punishment, but then added, 'After all it is my property. Throw the *Juth* out of his house.' Shortly afterwards I learnt that the *Juth*'s only crime was that he had defaulted on some payment due to the landowner.

I returned to Rojhan in January 1951 but I found I could not stay at the tribal headquarters for more than a few days. The feudal mentality that had begun to prevail

⁴⁴ *Juths* were the original inhabitants of the area, and the tongue they s was *Juthgali* (otherwise known as Seraiki).

within my family was more than I could bear. So, I packed a handful of belongings and crossed the river on horseback taking one of the old wooden boat ferries. Arriving at Sonmiani I set up camp. Sonmiani was lush green and, what is more, at a distance from Rojhan. Within a year I began the construction of my house there. It was designed on the plans of Baloch forts of old. It was here at Sonmiani that I settled down to what would turn out to be my short stint as a tribal chief.

The election campaign of 1951 provided a shocking eye-opener. A non-Baloch, whose family had earlier settled at Rojhan, stood for elections openly opposing the Sirdar family's candidate. In the elections he was badly defeated and even lost his deposit. But he was not forgiven as he had been accused of allegedly making disparaging remarks about the Sirdar's family during the campaign. A few weeks later he was set upon a few mile out of Rojhan. To humiliate him, an attempt was made to cut his nose off. During the struggle that ensued, the attackers bungled and cut his lips and tongue off as well! The unfortunate man bled to death. Such was the fate of anyone who dared to incur the wrath of the Sirdar family.

The Sirdar family owned hundreds of thousands of acres of land, of which some 330,000 acres were owned directly by my brothers and me in the settled area. This did not include our lands in the tribal area, Sindh and Khanewal. The lands in the settled area were managed under a pernicious *mahaldari* system. All the property was divided into a number of *mahals* each with its own manager, the *mahaldar*. These *mahaldars* were demigods of their areas, often terrorizing the local peasantry with beatings and the use of stocks which bound their hands and feet. The horses of the locals were often seized by the *mahaldar* for police use, and goats and chickens would be forcibly taken from the peasantry to feed local officialdom as well as the *mahaldar's* guests. The poor sharecropper would get a third of his harvested crop. The remainder of the crop would be divided into the landowner's share and the aptly called 'non-ploughing shareholder's share'. These non-ploughing shareholders were the middlemen who obtained a substantial share of the harvest for little or no contribution whatsoever.

On my arrival at Sonmiani the first thing I did was to abolish the iniquitous feudal practice. The sharecroppers on my farmlands got a two-thirds share thereafter. Local notables and others who had become used to their middlemen share complained bitterly but I refused to compromise. I am glad to state that my two brothers supported me in putting an end to this gross injustice.

The other issue which caused me much grief was the practice of *syah kaari*, the tribal custom of vengeful killing of adulterers. What made it even more intolerable was the fact on occasion a simple unproven accusation was deemed to be an excuse sufficient for an act of cold-blooded murder. I recall a vivid incident which took place in the mid-1950s which illustrates the horror of this tragic practice. Nabi Buksh, then a young man in his early twenties, confessed to me that he had killed his wife and wished to turn

himself in. His wife had only been a young girl of sixteen. According to Nabi Buksh, he had recently been taunted and accused of being a cuckold. It had not been the first time this had happened, and this time even his mother and sisters had begun to echo similar insults. This last taunt proved to be the final straw for Nabi Buksh. He felt he was left with little choice but to safeguard his honor. He went directly to his wife and told her what he had to do. By this stage of his tale, tears had begun to roll down Nabi Buksh's cheeks. His young teenage wife had insisted on saying her prayers. When she finished she raised the Holy Koran and staring directly into his eyes said, 'By this Holy Book I am innocent!' It was already nightfall. Without further ado, his wife walked in the dark ahead of him until they reached the riverside. On the riverbank she knelt and lowered her head on the damp earth and uttered the words, 'Do it now!' Nabi Buksh lowered his axe on her neck, killing her. He then threw her body into the river.

The tribal code cannot brook dishonor. An enraged mother-in-law, a rebuffed admirer, or an ordinary ill-wisher could easily point an accusing finger against a helpless woman and condemn her to death. In the heat of the moment *syah kaari* had resulted in the deaths of countless wives, sisters, and on occasions, even mothers. The man accused of adultery was also subject to a similar Draconian punishment. Unprincipled men have been known to settle scores by making accusations at their rivals, resulting in their deaths, as well as the deaths of innocent women. There have even been instances when the husband has used this as a pretext to get rid of an unattractive and quarrelsome wife. At times women are used as victims; this pretext is used to eliminate and murder someone with whom one has a dispute or an enmity.

For the women accused of *syah kaari* there could only be one escape, and that was to seek protection at the home of the tribal chief. According to tribal code, the chiefs home was sacrosanct, and once she reached its confines, she came under his protection, and no one could interfere. Over the years I gave protection to many of these women-innocent or otherwise. Along with providing protection came the responsibility of eventually marrying them off to suitable husbands. The successful suitor not only had to be a reliable man of good character, but to prevent bloodshed, he also had to belong to a different Mazari clan and live at a distance from her previous husband's family.

As one of the tribal chiefs of the area (along with my two brothers, the eldest being the paramount chief) I did my best to change this cruel practice, but in a tribal society ancient traditions are never easy to alter. Despite my utmost efforts the tribesmen refused to listen. 'We are not *beghairath*', was their stock rejoinder. The tribal system can at times present an unwavering monolith which refuses to budge with changing times. The system of *syah kaari* may have possibly worked as a deterrent in times past, but it has no place in modern times. Its sole long-term antidote is education. Only education can serve to broaden cultural horizons and with passage of time help eradicate practices that have no place in the present.

Despite the stiff resistance of the tribal elders, I was able to make some inroads and convince them to alter some of their ways. In *syah kaari* the dishonored husband's family had the additional right to demand a new bride from the adulterer's family. Often to further avenge the dishonor, this young girl was made to suffer needless physical and mental punishment by her new in-laws. It was a cruel and unjust retribution as the girl would be under the complete mercy of her new husband's family. I was able to convince the elders that in such instances it would be more appropriate to accept cash indemnities rather than demand young brides. With much reluctance this practice was slowly accepted. Today, this is much more common.

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In Sonmiani I built a small school with a playground and encouraged the people to send their children there. The non-Baloch *Juths* readily agreed, but I had difficulty convincing the Baloch tribesmen. Having little faith in education, they preferred to let their sons herd their livestock and continue with the old traditions. So, to entice them I opened boarding facilities with free meals, books and clothes for children of the very poor. The school functioned for thirty years until I was able to convince the government to set up a High School there. It is the duty of a Sirdar to look after his people, after all, if he does not do so who else will.

I also tried to set up medical facilities for the people at Sonmiani, but met with little success. Many years later I received help from the strangest of quarters. In 1978 while I was visiting Lahore, the Governor of Punjab, General Sarvar Khan, invited me to lunch. The Governor informed me that he had been directed by his superior, General Ziaul Haq, then the Chief Martial Law Administrator, to meet with me. Then, in the presence of three of my schoolmates from RIMC (including General Ahmed Jamal), I was offered a sanction for a sugar mill. It appeared that the sugar mill sanction had been previously awarded to Ashiq Mazari, but Sarvar Khan indicated that as Ashiq Mazari owed a large sum of money to the government, the administration was no longer pleased with him and had withdrawn the sanction.⁴⁵

Astonished by this offer, I declined as quickly and politely as I could, and said, 'I have enough difficulty managing the small piece of agricultural land I am now left with. Without money and experience, how do you expect me to run a sugar mill?' Sarvar Khan did not budge. He insisted that the government would easily find me a suitable Chinioti businessman to manage the mill; '... someone who knows the ropes', was the governor's expression. And the shortage of capital, he stated, would present little problem. 'Loans will easily be arranged', he said much to my discomfort.

⁴⁵ To my mind the real reason for change of heart on the government's was related to Ashiq Mazari's decision to join the People's Party. Much earlier during General Yahya's martial law, Ashiq Mazari had been one of the 303 senior civil servants who had been dismissed from service on charges of corruption.

Left with little choice, I made a more blunt refusal. General Sarvar Khan asked me to reconsider because, as he informed me, my brother, Mir Balakh Sher, his political ally Nasrullah Drishak, and Begum Afifa Mamdot had jointly approached him for the same sugar mill sanction. I suggested to the governor that it would also be a mistake to award the sugar mill sanction to these parties as they knew as little about the business as I did. I suggested that it would be better for the farmers of the Dera Ghazi Khati District if the sanction was given to a competent party who would help improve the long-term economy of the region.

Though the sugar mill sanction was later given to my brother in my 'financial well-being' did not end there. A couple of years later the new Governor of Punjab, General Jillani, sent a message asking me to meet him. By this time Zia had elevated himself to the Presidency. During our meeting General Jillani candidly confided that the President had directed him to offer me whatever help I required. Couched in such general terms I found the offer acceptable. I said I required for Sonmiani a *pukkah* road, electricity, a rural health centre, high schools and a public call office.

General Jillani replied with some surprise. 'But you don't live there!' he said. Indeed, by then I had more or less shifted to Karachi. But I had always felt indebted to the people of Sonmiani and told General Jillani so. With some reluctance the General agreed to my demands, but on the condition that I donate the land required for these facilities. I readily agreed to his condition, and donated the land. Shortly afterwards, true to his word, General Jillani fulfilled his commitment. Sonmiani got two schools, one each for boys and girls, a rural health unit, a macadamized road, and the village was finally electrified.

On my arrival in Sonmiani, 1951, it was an isolated village, without proper roads or electricity. When I brought my car there, people travelled for miles to see it. It was a novelty in that area - a *chalney vali* machine. It was to this place that I brought my bride, Souriya, in January 1953 shortly after we were married. She was eighteen and the only sister of my Aitchison classmate, Iftikhar Ahmed, whose family had settled in the State of Hyderabad Deccan in India. He had earlier been at Doon's School and Partition had forced him to join Aitchison. His mother and sister had followed him to Pakistan shortly after the army action in Hyderabad, and took up residence in Karachi. I can safely say that marrying Souriya was one of the wisest decisions I made.

Eleven months later, less than a week after the birth of my eldest son Sherazam, I travelled to Dera Bugti and married the daughter of the late Nawab Sir Mehrab Khan, the Bugti Chief. This subsequent second marriage had been arranged some years previously. I had little choice in the matter and was bound by tribal code to honor a commitment made by my family to the Bugti Chief. Such inter-tribal weddings were considered important in establishing good relationships between rival tribes. An ancestor of mine, Nawab Sir Imam Buksh Khan, had married the sister of the Marri

Sirdar in the 1870s. During those days the Marris and the Bugtis were the premier Baloch tribe in western Balochistan while the Mazaris and the Legharis occupied a similar position among the Baloch in Dera Jat.⁴⁶ In my case the Mazaris and Bugtis had been warring with each other for over two hundred years. It was thought judicious that a link be established between the families of the two chiefs. Under Baloch law a betrothal is as binding as the wedding itself. Once a girl is pledged by her family she cannot be given to anyone else. Any breach of the arrangement is counted as a grave dishonour to the aggrieved family and is unthinkable in Sirdar families.

Before I married Souriya I told her of my existing commitment to the Bugti family. Despite the liberal education that she had received at Mehboobia School in Hyderabad Deccan, she accepted the situation. Now, after more than forty years of marriage, I still appreciate her devoted support then. She has won my undying respect and love. Many people in these modern times might find our situation difficult to understand, but life is full of dilemmas and we all have to resolve issues within the constraints that are imposed on us.

* * *

Despite the events in my life I was kept busy in Sonmiani trying to usher in changes. Under the feudal *mahaldari* system, with the assistance of the local police the staff of the landholders had created an atmosphere of repression among the populace. No one could oppose the representatives of the landlords, and the police often operated without proper controls. Accepting bribes, the police would frequently implicate innocent people in crimes they had not committed. There was little recourse for those who wished for justice.

I decided to reinforce and resurrect the traditional *jirga* system. A tribal chief is the traditional arbitrator of all disputes. Exercising my tribal authority, I set up a committee of elders. Those involved in disputes could select tribal elders acceptable to both parties who would then resolve conflicts arising from ownership of grazing land, water rights, murder, cattle theft and other issues. Considering the partiality of the police, such a system had its advantages in a society where the people were too poor to hire lawyers and independently approach courts for justice. Besides, the vast distances involved in travelling to the tehsil headquarters at Rajanpur, which lay across the Indus, made the official judicial process exceedingly onerous for the poor. This was an entirely voluntary system and very soon most disputes were being resolved internally within the tribe without recourse to outside parties.

⁴⁶ In 1907 when NWFP was created from part of the original province Punjab, District Dera Jat was split into three districts - Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu going to NWFP and Dera Ghazi Khan remaining within Punjab.

Cattle theft and robberies were not uncommon in the area. A number of the tribesmen were expert cattle thieves. No one bothered reporting thefts to the police as they had little faith in them. Under the *jirga* system, I undertook to eliminate these crimes, and had the thieves tracked down and ensured that all stolen property was returned. No coercion was ever necessary. In those days the aura of chieftdom was sufficient in itself, and usually the thieves would confess their crimes once they were brought in. They would be fined and punished in the prescribed tribal fashion. I was pleased by the fact that within a year or two of my arrival, occurrences of theft virtually vanished from the area.

Not surprisingly, the local police and administration did not approve of my actions. Their source of additional income had begun to dry up completely. Soon they began dispatching adverse reports of me to their superiors. Even the local Superintendent of Police who often complimented me on improving the local law and order situation, joined the list of my critics. The flow of critical reports eventually reached the Chief Minister of Punjab, Nawab Muzaffar Qizilbash. Finally, one day I was served with a Notice of Offence. I had been accused of trying to run 'a parallel government'.

It had been reported to the government at Lahore that I did not recognize the government, and insisted on running my local area as an independent Sirdar by forcibly preventing people from going to the police or to the courts. In 1954 a Committee of Enquiry was set up by the Provincial Government. The Enquiry Team was headed by the local DC, Zahoor Azhar, a well-known CSP officer, and included a Superintendent of Police from Mianwali, Omar Khan Niazi. Though Omar Khan was known to be a man of integrity, he was put in a difficult position. As a police officer, he felt compelled to back his colleagues (the originators of the complaint) and prevent an erosion in their authority.

One of the cases laid before the Enquiry Team involved a *syah kaari* murder. The incident had taken place while I was on one of my regular tours of the area. I would often visit far-flung areas on horseback with a retinue of fifty or sixty tribesmen and make camp near isolated settlements and meet with the people. On this occasion I had made camp in the remote *kutch* *ilaka* between the two main channels of the Indus. I was woken up in the middle of the night by a messenger from Sirdar Ghaus Buksh Khan, an elderly relative of mine, and the second largest landholder in the area. He sent me a handwritten note informing me that a man and a married woman had been killed as a result of *syah kaari*. Ghaus Buksh Khan asked me to request the murdered man's father not to file a murder complaint with the police. Though the father was Ghaus Buksh Khan's tenant, Ghaus Bnksh Khan felt that my authority as a tribal chief would carry greater weight.

I sent a messenger immediately to the deceased's father asking him to come and see me. The elderly man with a flowing white beard arrived at dawn. It soon became obvious

that he had not heard of his son's death, and I had to break the painful news to him. He pulled the end of his beard into his mouth and clamped his teeth tightly on it. His fists clenched and his cheeks quivered, but he refused to give way to tears. The Baloch are expected to bear pain stoically. A few minutes later after he composed himself, turned to me dry-eyed and said, 'Is this why you have called me?' I nodded. He then praised his son and said that he would examine the facts of the alleged *syah kaari*, and if he felt his son had been unjustly killed he would avenge his death.

As he was leaving I told him about Sirdar Ghaus Buksh Khan's note. As the old man could not read, I explained the contents of the message to him. Then I told him that as it was he who had lost a son, I would leave it to his own better judgment to decide what course of action he ought to take.

Evidence was presented to the Enquiry Team that I had prevented relatives of five separate *syah kaari* victims from filing complaints with the police. In fact these murders had all been hushed up as a result of payments being made to the police by the families of the parties involved. Now I was being made answerable for the concealment of these crimes. Much to my astonishment, Omar Khan made reference to a letter sent to the Deputy Commissioner by Ghaus Buksh Khan complaining about me. This letter was produced in evidence against me. In a case where he himself had requested my help, Ghaus Buksh Khan now accused me of preventing the victim's father from filing a murder complaint! Suddenly it was clear to me that it was not just the police and the administration who had been displeased by my recent actions at Sonmiani, big landlords such as Ghaus Buksh Khan had also begun to resent the erosion of their authority.

To my good fortune, people who had been forcibly compelled to appear before the Enquiry Team to give evidence against me, refused to capitulate. Despite great pressure, which even included physical beatings, there were no witnesses against me. Finally, they dragged in the old man whose son had been murdered. When asked about his son's murder, the old man, who knew by then that his son had been hacked to pieces and dumped into the Indus, denied his death. He maintained that his son was not quite right in the head and was prone to wander off, going missing for days and sometimes months. He insisted that one day his son would turn up. In the meantime he asked the Enquiry Team not to use him to make unfounded accusations against his Sirdar. His words were, 'If you have enmity with my Sirdar and want to settle scores with him, then do it yourself. Do not use me'.

In September 1954, due to the lack of evidence and the honesty and integrity of Zahoor Azhar and Omar Khan, the Enquiry Team cleared me of all charges. The local administration, with the collaboration of Some members of my family, had failed in their determined attempt to prevent me from bringing about change in the Mazari area.

I was not quite twenty-four when I was acquitted of the serious charge of running 'a parallel government' to the Government of Pakistan.

CHAPTER 2

1950s-Years of Disastrous Intrigues

I first visited Karachi in March 1949 at the age of eighteen, little knowing that in years to come the city would become my home town. During my last years at Aitchison while I was completing my A Levels (or Higher Senior Cambridge as it was known then), Akbar Bugti returned to Lahore to attend a Pakistan Civil Service (CSP) course. While Akbar was there, he invited me to Quetta for a shoot during my school holidays. In those days there was no direct air link between the two cities. The two of us flew to Karachi to catch the connecting flight to Quetta. When we arrived at the port city we discovered that it was virtually impossible to get accommodation at the local hotels. The new capital of Pakistan had attracted a host of foreign missions who had yet to find proper accommodation, with the result that both the Palace and the Beach Luxury hotels⁴⁷ were filled to capacity with members of the diplomatic corps - high commissioners, ambassadors and their staff. Akbar Bugti and I were left with little choice but to make do with whatever accommodation we could lay our hands on. After a long drive from the airport, we eventually obtained rooms at a run-down establishment at Saddar. That night, finding our beds infested with bedbugs, we walked out into the street, hired a cycle-rickshaw and headed for Clifton believing that the sea breeze would protect us from an expected onslaught of mosquitoes. Crossing the Clifton Bridge onto what then were the outskirts of the city, we collapsed on two cement benches and fell asleep. Early in the morning we were woken by a police patrol. After we sleepily produced our credentials - which consisted of nothing more than our airline tickets to Quetta - the police left us alone. That was my introduction to Karachi.

Karachi was then a city blessed with cleanliness and was free from crime. The city was largely a creation of the British who had taken advantage of the natural harbour and built an army cantonment as part of their strategic requirements for the northwestern zone of their Indian Empire. Unlike the other major cities of Pakistan, it had remarkably little history. Before the British conquest in 1838, it had been ruled by the Talpurs of Sindh. In 1838 Colonel Pottinger, the British Resident of Sindh, had intercepted letters sent by the Talpur Amirs to the Shah of Persia in which the Sindhis had made their hostility to the unwarranted British interference in their affairs quite clear. Pottinger became convinced that the British influence on 'the Ameers hereafter must be through their fears'.⁴⁸ He accordingly advised the Governor-General that a treaty would only be entered into by the Talpurs once British troops set foot on Sindhi soil. The presence of

⁴⁷ The only good quality hotels in Karachi in 1949.

⁴⁸ *Parliamentary Papers* - A. Burnes & Others on a Mission to Sind, p. 1 cited in: C. L. Marriwalla, *British Policy towards Sind up to the First Afghan War 1839, 1947* (Reprinted by Indus Publications 1982), p. 105.

the soldiers would render 'the Ameers to be amenable to our demands'.⁴⁹ British ships carrying troops anchored off Manora Island at the entrance to the Karachi harbour on the evening of 1 February 1839. Next morning, under a flag of truce, a British officer was rowed to shore where he presented the *killadar* a demand for an unconditional surrender of the fort at Manora. When the demand was rejected, British troops landed near the fort and a further demand was made for the surrender. The *killadar* requested for time to consult his superior, the Governor of Karachi, but Admiral Maitland, on his flagship the H.M.S. *Wellesley*, insisted on allowing only fifteen minutes for surrender. Within minutes of the expiry of that period, the *Wellesley* opened fire on the fort, blowing away its southern face. Shortly afterwards in a bloodless takeover, the British troops planted their ensign on the high walls of the fort. Thus began the first incident of British occupation of the geographical entity which was later to become Pakistan.

The pre-British walled town of Karachi (named after the Baloch tribe of Kulachi) occupied an area of only thirty-five acres. The fortified town had two gateways—Mithadar, which led to the freshwater of the Lyari stream, and Kharadar, which faced the brackish salt water of the sea. The Acting Adjutant of the invading troops described the scene in 1838: 'The town is excessively dirty, and the inhabitants generally are most squalid looking set of wretches. The great majority are Hindoos. The houses are generally mud-built and flat-roofed; on top of them are wicker ventilators facing the sea, which perform the double duty of windsail and skylight'.⁵⁰ Beyond the walled confines of the town there was an extensive suburb bordering the banks of the Lyari River, which contained as many houses as the town itself. In 1839, according to a Captain S. V. W. Hart, the total population was 13,850, out of which there were '9,000 Hindoos and 4,850 Mahomedans'. Most of the Hindus were traders and 'many of the Hindoo merchants were very wealthy'.⁵¹ The Muslims of pre-British Karachi consisted of Baloch, Jokiahs, Mohanas and Juths. The town then served as the commercial seaport for Sindh and carried trade with Bombay, the Malabar coast, Muscat, and the Persian Gulf. Its exports included 'fleece, wool, shark fins, dried fruits, dyes, leather, silk goods', but the main export was opium.⁵² Its principal imports were 'sugar, spices, British cloths, grains, wood, brass, steel, tin, etc.'. ⁵³ History also records that there was an extensive trade in slaves as well. These unfortunate people were classified into two groups: the Hubshees of Ethiopia and the Siddees from other parts of Africa.⁵⁴ The

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Captain J. Martin B. Neill, *Recollections of Four Years Service in the East with H.M. 40th Regiment*, London, IOLR, Cat. no. T 5009, 1845.

⁵¹ Cited in: Alexander F. Baillie, *Kurrachee: Past, Present and Future*, London, 1890, p. 29.

⁵² In 1839, exports from Karachi amounted to Rs. 2,146,625 of which Rs. 1,600,000 was by export of opium which came by camels from Rajputana and was shipped to the Portuguese port of Daman, where it was then re-exported to China. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

⁵³ Captain J. Martin B. Neill, *Recollections of Four Years Service in the East with H. M. 40th Regiments*, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

⁵⁴ Alexander F. Baillie, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

descendants of these forced immigrants continue to be part of the city's life a century and a half later.

The earlier Karachi was largely eradicated by the British. As all the previous construction had been made of dried mud - even the large fort constructed by the Talpurs on Manora Island to defend the harbour was of adobe - it made it all the more easy for the British to construct their new cantonment city. The arrival of the British was soon followed by a host of new communities. They consisted of trading classes who catered primarily to the British, as well as others who were attracted simply by the commercial stability of Karachi due to the presence of the British. These newer immigrants included Parsees, Bohras, Khojas and Memons. Karachi's development largely began under Bartle Frere who was appointed Commissioner of Sindh at the age of thirty-five in 1851. It was Frere who decided that Karachi ought to become the port for Punjab (which then included both the NWFP and Delhi) thereby bypassing Calcutta and Bombay. After a marine survey the port was completed, and by 1858 work began on a railway from Karachi to Kotri. New roads were also constructed throughout the province with proper brick bridges to circumvent the canal system. Frere was the first to introduce the European concept of postage stamps in India by the introduction of a stamp bearing the words 'Scinde District Dawk'. He was instrumental in introducing the Arabic script for the Sindhi language which had until then remained an oral and unwritten language. Many buildings, including schools, courtrooms and other official structures, were constructed during his short term of office. Karachi owes a great deal to Frere. When he left in 1859 to become the Governor of the Bombay Presidency, his services to the city were recognized by the building of Frere Hall which was opened in 1865.

By mid-twentieth century, Karachi's leading commercial houses were owned mostly by Parsees, Hindus and a handful of Muslims. As Muslims were averse to providing pork and alcohol and the Hindus to beef and leather goods, the Parsees achieved a virtual monopoly in provisioning the British colonial population. The trading classes of Bohras, Khojas and Memons now made up the entire Muslim middle class of Karachi, if not of the whole province. Towards the city's western boundary there were pockets of Brauhi, Baloch and Makrani villages. Things soon changed with the creation of Pakistan. In 1947 Karachi became the capital of the new nation. By 1949 there was a large presence of Muslim refugees from India, but their numbers were not as large as they later came to be. Karachi became the only cosmopolitan city in Pakistan. The streets were clean, the shops looked inviting and the people were full of pride for their new country.

In 1949 Karachi was still tiny in comparison with the modern city of today. Its eastern boundary was delineated by the Napier Barracks. Drigh Road continued towards the airport surrounded by open land until the Drigh air force base seven or so miles away in the south, the city limits terminated just past the Clifton Bridge. Past the bridge the dirt road leading to Clifton would often be covered by water at high tide; the tidal sea

water would carry over as far as the racecourse. Even Queens Road carried a deserted look, with the railway godowns on one side and, with the exception of a set of buildings called the Intelligence School, a wide open space bounding the mangrove creek on the other side. The north western limits were reached at Soldier Bazaar on the other side of Bunder Road. Even venturing, as Akbar Bugti and I did, to Sandspit (until then I had never seen the sea) meant hiring a boat at Keamari—the bridge across the creek to Sandspit had yet to be built. Flying out of Karachi was also quite different in those days. A few months later that same year I returned briefly to Karachi to catch a flight for London. I had the option of catching the flying boat service leaving from Korangi Creek or taking a BOAC Constellation from the international airport. As the flying boat service was a great deal slower, in reaching its destinations I decided on the Constellation.

In the absence of regional flight services a lot of journeying was done by road. There was a narrow carpeted road from Karachi which continued on from Drigh Road towards Thatta and onwards to Kotri (the Ghulam Muhammad Barrage near Hyderabad had yet to be completed) and from there to Sukkur. This was of course then the main national roadway. During the hot months of summer, in the absence of air-conditioning, all our driving was done at night time. There was very little traffic and virtually no trucks as goods were still sent by train. During the journey to Sonmiani, which normally took nine hours or so, I would rarely encounter more than half a dozen cars and a dozen or so trucks. On one occasion the car I was travelling in broke down, near Hyderabad in the early hours of the morning. It was several hours until another vehicle appeared. Luckily it happened to be a tractor, a rarity in those days, which then helped tow the car to Hyderabad for repairs. And quite unlike the present route, it was sparsely populated, with great stretches of tranquil wilderness and open spaces dominating the countryside. The few towns one came across were small and had yet to acquire the uncontrolled squalor of today. Travelling in the 1950s was more leisurely and tiffin-carriers were still very much in vogue. Journeys would often be broken for tea stops at the local irrigation rest houses which were well-staffed and offered comfortable stops for road-weary travelers.

With time I became more familiar with Karachi. I had a number of school friends there and among them was Iftikhar Ahmed whose family had moved from Hyderabad in India soon after Partition. His parents stayed at the newly opened Metropole Hotel, which had quickly established itself as one of the centers of entertainment in the city along with the neighboring Palace Hotel. The restaurants of these two hotels were packed each evening with the city's elite. Dinner jackets were de rigueur for the men, and the ladies were fashionably dressed in silk saris, with the more daring wearing sleeveless blouses. There were cabaret shows and live bands providing the latest music of the times and the hotel guests danced till the late hours of the night. Alcohol was of course freely and abundantly available. The men who had until recently been accustomed to the liberal culture of the British Raj had little of the double standards that

were eventually to follow. Karachi had also begun to attract visitors from other parts of Pakistan who now flocked in to savour the social delights offered by the newly blossoming cosmopolitan city.

The elite that developed at Karachi in those early years was select in number. Virtually everyone knew each other. There were the senior bureaucrats such as Iskander Mirza, Abbas Khalilee, Osman Ali (and his vivacious wife, Nuchchi) and M.A. Baig. Military officers were represented by the likes of General (Joe) Yusuf, General Raza and Air Commodore Maqbool Rab. Representing the business community were people such as Yusuf Chinoy, Munir of Hyesons, Yusuf and Mahmood Haroon and the leading Parsee families, such as the Dinshaws, Kandawallas and the Cowasjees. There were of course many others, among them was the vast diplomatic corps then stationed at Karachi.

Cabaret shows were a popular item in the 1950s. Singers, belly dancers and bands would regularly fly in from Havana, Beirut and Cairo and would appear at Le Gourmet in the Palace Hotel. Le Gourmet was the most popular nightclub. Diplomats and younger members of the social set would gather there every night to dance the foxtrot, samba, rumba or whatever took their fancy. Senior politician of the day, H. S. Suhrawardy, who enjoyed dancing, would often attend these gatherings. The military would also join in. I remember once spotting an inebriated Brigadier Yahya Khan (later General and eventually President) sitting at a corner table enjoying himself. Among the younger set to regularly frequent Le Gourmet during the 1950s were, among others, my brother Mir Balakh Sher, and my brothers-in-law Iftikhar Ahmed and Ahmed Nawaz Bugti. Unlike today the younger set had an opportunity to enjoy themselves openly without offending other sections of the community.

Another tradition of the 1950s were the elevenses at the Shehzan on Victoria Road. Members of the more idle younger set would congregate to the Shehzan for morning tea and pastries. The restaurant did a roaring trade during lunch, and followed it by a busy session providing afternoon teas to its well-heeled customers. The arrival of the Inter-Continental Hotel in the mid-sixties unfortunately brought Shehzan's popularity to a close. The lure of a newly opened five star hotel, with its Demitasse coffee bar, Cafe Suroor and Chandni Lounge, provided too strong a competition, and Shehzan slowly sank in its wake.

Shopping was a much easier pastime for the shoppers of the fifties and early sixties. There was little traffic and car parking posed no difficulty in the major shopping area of Elphinstone and Victoria Roads. English Cold Storage provided all sorts of foods and refreshments. Shafiq Sons offered a wide range of household ware. Hadyn's catered for the musical tastes of everyone, both in the form of records as well as pianos which once used to be made on the premises. The adjoining Bliss & Co., the chemists, sold a wide range of pharmaceutical products. Perfumes and toiletries were also available at Queen's (run by the charming Ram Mehtani) located at the Rock Court on Victoria

Road. For saddlery and quality leather goods there was Jafferjee's. Kashmir Emporium was a popular place to obtain the exotic Kashmiri gift. And for the discerning male dresser there was, of course, Hamid Tailors, who insisted upon choosing his customers selectively. Movies could be seen at the Palace, Capitol and Paradise cinemas. Guns and ammunition could be obtained from Pioneer Arms, Buksh Ellahi or Dossul's. For book lovers, such as myself, there were a host of book shops: Paramount, Greenwich, Thomas & Thomas, Pak-American Commercial and Mackwin's. For the avid bibliophile there was the enterprising Safdar Mehdi, who would bring piles of books strapped on his bicycle to the homes of customers. He specialized in rare volumes on the subcontinent which he obtained by sniffing about among older book collections in other parts of the city. Among my few rivals for these rare books was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Mehdi never had any qualms about playing one customer against the other. One day I managed to pick up a valuable volume which had been annotated by the redoubtable General John Jacob. The book had also been keenly sought by Bhutto. Years later Bhutto would often ruefully remind me of his regret on missing out on purchase of that particular book.

Not all Karachi venues were open for the new Pakistani elite. The Sind Club resisted the change brought about by Independence, and stubbornly maintained its 'Europeans only' policy. Finally in 1952 and only after Iskander Mirza, the Defence Secretary, threatened to close it down, did the club relent its racial bias. In early 1959 I was elected when my name was proposed by Ishaat Habibullah and seconded by Syed Wajid Ali. Others who joined the Sind Club at about this time included Brigadier 'Hesky' Baig, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Usman Ali, General Latif and Safdar Rashid. During those early years of my membership I recall the club atmosphere as being exceedingly formal. Yet in the British tradition it came to represent a home away from home, despite the fact that a dinner jacket was compulsory for men in the evenings, and that club rules were strictly applied without exception. Over the years, some of these standards have been relaxed, but in some cases not all for the better.

In the earlier years there used to be a club rule which used to irk me somewhat. Despite the introduction of 'native' members, 'native dress' continued to be frowned upon by the club for many years. I had made my feelings about this known to members of the managing committee. I recall the genial, gentlemanly, but pukka Ishaat Habibullah replying that native dress would be allowed in the club 'over my dead body'. The rule came to an inglorious end when in 1972 during the days of Z. A. Bhutto's 'awami' government, the club invited Rasool Buksh Talpur, Governor of Sindh, to a commemorative function. The governor duly arrived at the club dressed in a crumpled khaddar *shalwar katneez*, wearing open leather sandals. The embarrassed club seniors, including the genteel Ishaat Habibullah, realized that either they had to turf the hapless governor off the club premises, or amend the rules. The idea of maintaining double standards was an anathema to these gentlemen. Accordingly, the rules were altered and national dress worn with a *sherwani* or a formal waistcoat, finally became an acceptable dress on the club's premises.

By late 1953 my wife and I returned to Karachi after a long acclimatization stay at Sonmiani. Souriya had, much to her credit, not only become well-versed with all things tribal, but had also learnt to speak Balochi. We rented a house in PECHS, near the Nursery area of Karachi, where Souriya stayed with my two sons Sherazam and Shehryar while I regularly commuted between Karachi and my tribal homeland. With hindsight I can regard that period as the blissful years of Karachi. In the 1950s local industry and businesses were booming with financial success. People wandered around the city at all hours of the day and night feeling totally safe. The cinemas were filled to capacity as people had time to enjoy their leisure hours. The city was then rapidly becoming an amicable melting pot of different ethnic groups. The *muhajirs* continued to flock from across the border. Soon they were joined by the Pathan laborers who came in vast numbers to take part in the construction boom which was soon to alter the city beyond recognition. The majority of the city's skilled labor came from the Punjab. Others soon followed, including businessmen from all over the country keen to participate in the expanding wealth offered by the fast growing city. It rapidly transformed Karachi, making it an amalgam of all the diverse cultures that existed in Pakistan. To the majority of its inhabitants all seemed well with their new country. Everyone was proud of Pakistan and expected the future to blossom for them as well as for their country. Many lives had been lost and many sacrifices had been made to achieve a separate homeland for the Muslim majority areas of the subcontinent, but it was felt that it had been well worth the cost. But unknown to most of us, even then in those earliest of days of our good fortune when the future looked the brightest to all of us, dark clouds had already begun to gather and loom-albeit unnoticed - high above. The cause of this future gloom was hidden from us by patriotic blandishments and other forms of artificial self-concealments, but the damage had begun. Behind those high-sounding political utterances issued from above it now seems obvious that the cankerous rot had by then already begun to set in. The cause of our misfortune, as always, could be found in the selfish obsessions of our national leadership.

There is no question that the desire for a separate Muslim entity arose from a great fear among the Muslims that they would be swamped by the Hindus. The differences between the Muslims and Hindus were deep and pervasive. The two-hundred-year old British presence had largely finished the power that the Muslims had once possessed by their domination of the subcontinent for centuries. Greatly outnumbered, the Muslims feared that they would totally be engulfed by the Hindu population. This not unjustified fear, led to the rise of the Muslim League under the capable hands of the Quaid-i-Azam, Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah. But one fact that is constantly overlooked, is that this fear largely took hold in provinces where the Hindu population was dominant. In the provinces of British India where the Muslim majority prevailed, there was a general absence of this fear. It was around these areas that the future Pakistan was eventually to be built. Ironically, it was in these same areas that the Muslim League was politically at its weakest.

In the 1937 provincial elections the Muslim League managed to join a coalition government in Bengal. It won no seats in Sindh and the NWFP. Punjab brought in only two seats for the League, and even then one of the two successful candidates, Raja Ghazanfar Ali, on the very day of being elected, shifted his allegiance to the Unionist Party after being offered a parliamentary secretaryship. Clearly, in the area that was to later become Pakistan, only Bengal showed a degree of sympathy towards the Muslim League.

Since attaining its status as a separate province in 1936, Sindh was beset with rivalries among rising new personalities. The rural gentry had largely remained uneducated and had to a great extent abdicated their leadership role. They had been replaced by the newly educated semi-urbanized middle-classes who were mostly lawyers from the provincial towns. Despite these changes there remained two dominant political blocs: the Baloch Mir group and the Syed group, representing the interests of the many *pir* families of the province. According to the census of 1901, some twenty-three percent of Sindhi Muslims were Baloch⁵⁵ and their leaders held the largest estates in the province. The Syed group, which was much smaller in number, had great support from the *pir* families and their *mureeds* or followers due to their control of religious shrines.

The province of Sindh was created on 1 April 1936 under the Government of India Act 1935, and 'disunity and factionalism [became] the hallmarks of Muslim politics throughout the decade of Provincial Autonomy'.⁵⁶ The 1937 elections revealed the clear dominance of the rural elite of large landholders, clan leaders and *pirs*. Urban politicians such as Abdullah Haroon (then leader of his Sindh United Party) suffered defeat in Karachi at the hands of Allah Buksh Gabol, who had the support of the urban Baloch Mir voting bloc in Lyari. Another defeated politician was Shah Nawaz Bhutto. He was beaten in Larkana by Abdul Majid Sindhi, the leader of his own Sindh Azad Party. Bhutto's defeat partly stemmed from the fact that the Bhutto family head, Wadero Nabi Buksh, had opposed him.

In 1937 the first government of Sindh was formed under the chief ministership of Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, leader of his own Sindh Muslim Party. He had managed to gain the vital support of the Mir bloc. As a result, most of his ministers were from the Baloch group, such as Mir Bande Ali Talpur, Mir Muhammad Khan Chandio and Allah Buksh Gabol. Their rival Syed group consisted of G. M. Syed, Miran Muhammad Shah, Muhammad Ali Shah, Ghulam Hyder Shah and Khair Shah. The first Sindh Assembly was marked by a myriad of floor-crossings and constant shifting

⁵⁵ *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind*, 1907, p. 154.

⁵⁶ Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1990, p. 39.

of alliances, in which party loyalties counted for nothing.⁵⁷ The only notable consistent factor among all the prevailing chaos was the importance of the two solid Mir and Syed blocs.

By March 1938, political combinations had run out for Hidayatullah, and he had to resign in favor of Allah Buksh Soomro. Indirectly this proved a windfall for the fortunes of Muslim League. Many politicians, unhappy with the state of affairs, now joined the League - these included Abdullah Haroon, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Bandeh Ali Talpur and G. M. Syed. However with the exception of Haroon (who seemed to have been genuinely motivated against Soomro's pro-Congress leanings), most of the new entrants joined as a result of factional rivalries in the struggle for office. Hidayatullah and the Mir bloc were motivated by revenge and a chance to regain the government. G. M. Syed, who professed to represent interests of the Sindhi *haris*, or *zamindars* was greatly angered by the Soomro government's proposal to increase land revenue assessments in the Sukkur Barrage area.⁵⁸ Within ten months the fragility of the League's new strength was exposed. In January 1939 Hidayatullah - resenting Haroon's ascendancy to League presidentship - deserted the Muslim League, taking the Mir bloc with him. He became a minister in Allah Buksh Soomro's government. Unfortunately for these defectors, the Soomro government collapsed in March 1940 due to serious communal violence in Sukkur district.

In 1940, the League at Khuro's prompting, agreed to dissolve its Assembly party and combined with the Hindu Independents to form the Nationalist Party. Then accepting Bandeh Ali Talpur as premier, to obtain the Mir bloc's support, it formed a new coalition government. This unorthodox maneuver had been made simply to attain office. Mr. Jinnah and his now stalwart Sindh League president, Abdullah Haroon, initially disagreed with Khuro's scheme, but later they reluctantly concurred. Their fears were soon justified as the League's Assembly members began flagrantly disobeying the All-India Muslim League's directives. Mr. Jinnah visited Karachi in December 1940 only to find that his ministers were more interested in enjoying the prerequisites of power and office than advancing the cause of the League and Pakistan. Forced to accept the realities of rural power in Sindh politics, Mr. Jinnah nevertheless managed to exert a semblance of control by making the ministers step down from office in March 1941. When Bandeh Ali Talpur's government came to an end, Soomro once more became the premier. Later, endeavoring to please the Congress High Command, he renounced the award of OBE and title of Khan Bahadur given to him by the British. Displeased with Soomro's behaviour, the governor asked him to resign.

⁵⁷ The Sindh Muslim Party of Hidayatullah had won only four seats in elections. When it became clear that Hidayatullah was the British governor's favorite for the post of chief minister, a further twenty-four Assembly members joined his party, largely at the expense of Maroon's Sindh United Party.

⁵⁸ Ian Talbot, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Hidayatullah once more jumped ship and rejoined the Muslim League. The death of Abdullah Haroon in May 1942 seemed to have removed his objections to the League. Having returned to the party, he was by October 1942 heading the new Muslim League government. Hidayatullah managed to hang on to the post of premier till 1946, despite the many schemes hatched by other League members to get rid of him. On Mr. Jinnah's insistence that serving ministers could not simultaneously hold organizational offices in the League, Khuro, Haroon's successor, had been made to resign the party presidency. He was now replaced by G. M. Syed. As Hidayatullah had carried the Mir bloc with him into the Assembly, the party now had an indomitable leader of the rival Syed bloc as party president. G. M. Syed was supported by Muhammad Hashim Gazdar, a Karachi politician who was a bitter rival of the younger Haroons. The new party president now began a vociferous campaign to unseat Hidayatullah. Despite G. M. Syed's claim to uphold the interests of the *haris*, and criticism of the government's tardiness in instituting agrarian reform, his earlier hostile reaction to the reassessment of land revenue in Sukkur was quite revealing. He was now simply playing his part in the traditional struggle between Mirs and Syeds - land reforms and rights of the *haris* were simply appropriate weapons to browbeat the Mir bloc's large land-owning classes. It had the added appeal of attracting support from the indigenous Sindhis to the Syed bloc in their political battle against their Baloch rivals.

The League's internal conflict (Mir bloc vs. Syed bloc) became increasingly bitter. In July 1944 G. M. Syed, as party president, unsuccessfully called upon the League ministers to resign. By now G. M. Syed controlled the League Council and Working Committee, having disqualified all branches which had backed his opponents. The League had irrevocably split between the Syed and Mir factions, leading to farcical situations as was demonstrated in the 1944 by-elections at Shikarpur caused by the murder of Allah Buksh Soomro.⁵⁹ Hidayatullah wanted his son, Anwar, to contest on the League ticket, but the party parliamentary board, dominated by G. M. Syed's men, gave the ticket to their own nominee. The League's disunity ensured that an outside candidate - Moula Buksh Soomro, the murdered man's brother - won. By 1945 G. M. Syed was intriguing with Moula Buksh Soomro to bring down the government. Hidayatullah preempted G. M. Syed's plot by winning over Soomro by awarding him a ministership. As Soomro was not a League member, a crisis ensued. Mr. Jinnah had to step in by first reprimanding G. M. Syed for causing the crisis, and then instructing Hidayatullah to sack Soomro if he did not join the League.

The obsessive quest for power and intrigue among the Sindhi politicians made the principled Mr. Jinnah quite contemptuous of them. In 1945 the British governor of Sindh reported to the Viceroy that 'Jinnah dislikes them all. He once told me he could buy the lot of them for five lakh of rupees, to which I replied I could do it a lot

⁵⁹ Khuro was arrested in the Allah Buksh Soomro murder case. He was later acquitted, but not quite exonerated. Interestingly, on his release it was said that Yusuf Haroon garlanded him with gold sovereigns.

cheaper'.⁶⁰ To overcome the struggle that had broken out for League tickets for the 1946 elections, Mr. Jinnah cobbled together a seven-member parliamentary board. Within a short while the board split between two groups: a majority belonging to the Hidayatullah-Khuro-Mir grouping, and a minority supporting its chairman, G. M. Syed. Outnumbered, G. M. Syed simply adjourned the board, which then prompted the frustrated Mr. Jinnah to suspend its operations. Liaquat Ali Khan was sent to Karachi where he convened a meeting of the League's central parliamentary committee which found G. M. Syed's adjournment unconstitutional. The rebellious G. M. Syed then held a meeting of his Provincial League Council which carried a no-confidence motion against Liaquat Ali Khan and his committee. Totally fed up with the situation, Mr. Jinnah visited Karachi and personally placed the responsibility of selecting League election candidates in the hands of the central parliamentary board. The board eventually nominated candidates favorable to Hidayatullah, thereby infuriating G. M. Syed and his bloc. G. M. Syed now insisted in putting up the Syed bloc nominees as rivals to the League's official candidates. Left with little choice, the League expelled G. M. Syed from its membership. The recalcitrant politician took a number of men from the Syed bloc with him, including Muhammad Ali Shah, Syed Khair Shah and Pir Bahadur Shah of Hala, and some suggest, also Rs. 50,000 of League funds.

The outcome of the elections was mixed. Despite winning twenty-eight out of the thirty-four Muslim seats, the Muslim League was threatened by the success of the Syed group which had formed an opportunistic partnership with the Congress and other Hindu leaders, and claimed to have twenty-nine members. Governor Mudie insisted that the largest party be first given an opportunity to form a government. The Muslim League government of Hidayatullah precariously managed to last until early September 1946.⁶¹ The governor then dissolved the Assembly and ordered fresh elections. By the time the elections took place in December 1946, Partition appeared inevitable. This time the Syed bloc was crushed with only one of its members getting elected.⁶² The victory had been won in the name of Pakistan, but it was an inescapable fact that Pakistan meant little to the Sindhi leaders at the time of Partition. They were singularly concerned with winning office at the expense of all else, and had used the Muslim League simply as a vehicle for their own ambitions. The crushing defeat of the Syed bloc served only to further aggravate G. M. Syed's obsessive hostility towards Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League's concept of Pakistan.

In Punjab the 1937 elections brought about a great victory for the Unionist Party. The party was a loose coalition of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh landholders. It had won seventy-three out of the seventy-five rural Muslim seats, and a total of ninety-nine seats out of

⁶⁰ Dow to Wavell, 20 September 1945, L/P & J/5/261 India Office Records, cited in Ian Talbot, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁶¹ During this period it was rumored that Khuro was intriguing with the opposition Congress Party to depose Hidayatullah and take over as premier Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, Cambridge University Press 1985, p. 219.

⁶² K. S. Khoso was the solitary successful Syed bloc candidate.

an Assembly of 175 seats.⁶³ The result was a severe embarrassment for the League. To rectify the situation Mr Jinnah entered into a pact with the leader of the Unionists, Sir Sikander Hayat Khan. Under the pact Sir Sikander agreed to advise all Muslim members of the Unionist Party to join the Muslim League. They would form a Punjab Muslim Assembly Party which would be subject to the rules of the Central and Provincial Parliamentary Boards of the League. But the agreement would not affect the continuation of the government which would retain its Unionist name and identity. Under this strange arrangement both Sikander and Mr. Jinnah benefited. Sir Sikander assumed total control over the Punjab League. For Mr. Jinnah obtaining Unionist support meant a strong boost for the Muslim League's standing in All-India politics after the party's disastrous showing in the Indian Provincial Elections.

During the following years Unionist controlled to many complaints about the stultification of the League's politics.⁶⁴ The advent of the Second World War led to army recruitment and requisitioning and rationing of grain which weakened the Union Party's popularity. At the same time Khizer Hayat Tiwana, the new Unionist premier, was facing challenges from his party leadership.⁶⁵ Mr. Jinnah took advantage of the situation to confront Tiwana with League discontentment. Their talks ended in a hopeless state of disagreement which eventually led to Tiwana's expulsion from the League in May 1944. Within a few months a large number of Unionists who were dissatisfied with Tiwana expressed their loyalty to the League.⁶⁶ By the end of 1944 the League had twenty-seven members in the Punjab Assembly.

Pre-Partition Punjab remained in the hands of the Unionist Party until almost the very last moment before Independence. It took the collapse of the Simla Conference in July 1945 for the realization to dawn on the Muslim landholders that their party was no longer capable of safeguarding their interests. By the end of 1945 there was a large-scale defection of Muslim landlords from the Unionist Party to the Muslim League. The change of mood was so dramatic that the Unionist leader Khizer Hayat Tiwana was abandoned by even some of his own kinsmen. At the 1946 provincial elections, the League made tremendous gains. The key to its success lay with the landlords and the political clout they wielded. The League obtained seventy-five out of eighty-six Muslim seats, but remained short of a majority in the 175-strong Assembly and found itself unable to form a coalition. In the end, Sir Khizer whose party managed a paltry eighteen seats formed a Unionist coalition with the Congress and the Akali Sikhs. In

⁶³ Other successful Muslim candidates (in the 1937 elections) include i) Two from the Muslim League: Raja Ghazanfar Ali - who soon after getting elected defected to the Unionists - and Malik Barkat Ali. ii) Two from the Congress: Mian Iftikharuddin of Baghbanpura and Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain of Ludhiana.

⁶⁴ One example: Mr. Jinnah was asked, 'How could the Punjab League grow if its leader [Nawab of Mamdot] refused to allow Primary League branches to be established on his Ferozepore estate?' Khan Rabb Nawaz to Jinnah, 25 March 1943, Quaid-i-Azam Papers, File 379/41 NAP.

⁶⁵ Mir Maqbool Mahmood, Nawab Muzaffar Khan and Shaukat Hayat are said to have had ambitions for the chief ministership.

⁶⁶ Foremost among them were Shaukat Hayat, Mumtaz Daultana, Mia Abdul Aziz and Sheikh Sadiq Hussain.

March 1947, faced with the realities of the impending partition of Punjab, Tiwana had little choice but to resign.

The new Punjab Muslim League government which came in its place was weak from the onset. The personal rivalries of Feroz Khan Noon, Mumtaz Daultana and Nawab Iftikhar Mamdoj rose to the surface even before Independence. The core strength of the vitalized Punjab Muslim League remained with the landlords, whose remarkable capacity for political accommodation was notorious. Such expediency was hardly the firm footing the Muslim League required to build its long-term foundations in Punjab.

In administering the NWFP the British had enlisted the help of the leading Khans of the area to maintain their power. In return for official patronage the Khans used their traditional authority to help keep the peace. By the 1920s the Khans had begun to increasingly rely on British backing at the expense of traditional authority, which suffered in decline. They now faced a growing challenge to their leadership from the smaller Khans in their areas. It was the younger members of the smaller Khan families who were to provide the leadership of the Frontier Congress and Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. In time even the British came to realize that their over-reliance on the large Khans had created conditions which led the popularity of the Congress movement, by alienating the rival smaller Khans and blocking hopes of the tenants for agrarian reform.⁶⁷

The 1919 Khilafat Movement of the Indian Muslims - a reaction to the harsh conditions imposed on the Turkish Sultan at the end of the First World War - had a major impact on NWFP's politics. The Congress Party's support for the Khilafat campaign created a feeling of cooperation between the largely Hindu based political party and the Frontier Muslims. The core of the Congress - linked Khudai Khidmatgar Movement were Muslims who had supported the Khilafat Movement and rose to prominence with it. Notable among them were the brothers, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr Khan Sahib. Ghaffar Khan and Syed Qasim Shah formed the Afghan Jirga in 1929, calling for social and economic reform at the expense of the pro-British larger Khans, and sought to assist the Congress in its bid for Independence. Volunteers of this organization were called Khudai Khidmatgars, who wearing their red shirts were assigned to various villages. The 1930 Civil Disobedience campaign in Peshawar and its violent suppression known as the Kissakhwani Bazaar Massacre (which led to over one hundred dead) eventually led to the merger between the Afghan Jirga and the Congress. The officially condoned violence exacerbated the anti-British feelings and gave rise to the increased popularity of the Khudai Khidmatgars. This movement soon eclipsed its parent body, the Afghan Jirga. Despite the merger between the Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgars, they remained in essence two separate organizations. The Khudai Khidmatgars stayed mainly concerned with parochial Pathan interests and its organization continued to

⁶⁷ S. Rittenburg, *The Independence Movement in India's North-West Frontier Province*, Columbia, 1977, p. 107.

depend on the factions that made up traditional Pathan politics. Significantly, the leadership of this movement was provided by men from the smaller Khan families. The pro-British larger Khans were clearly opposed to the Khudai Khidmatgars. and many later turned to Muslim League for protection.

Two earlier attempts to form the Muslim League in the NWFP had failed. In 1936 when Mr. Jinnah visited the area to form a Parliamentary Board to fight elections, the weakness of the League was revealed - of the eighteen men chosen by Mr. Jinnah, six promptly deserted and joined the Congress. Only two of them were successfully elected in the end. But these two men had refused to contest as League candidates and chose instead to stand as Azad Party members. The 1937 elections brought about a Congress-Khudai Khidmatgars government of NWFP which lasted till 1939 when its leader, Dr Khan Sahib, resigned at the behest of Congress Party national leadership, who were protesting at the Viceroy's unilateral declaration of war against the Axis powers without bothering to consult the central legislature at Delhi.

It was not however until 1943 - with many of the Congress members of the legislative assembly in jail - that the NWFP Muslim League was able to take advantage and form a government under Aurangzeb Khan of Gandapur. With ten Congressite members locked up, the chief minister managed to scrape together twenty-two members to form the government. These members included a number of independent Khans who joined only after being offered the prospect of rich government pickings, and not because they supported the League's political philosophy. During its two year period in office, Aurangzeb Khan's government became notorious for its corruption. By the time the government came to an end in March 1945, the NWFP Muslim League was internally divided and poorly organized to face the 1946 elections. Despite the fact that the province contained a higher percentage of Muslims than any other province in India, the League fared badly in the 1946 elections. It won a mere seventeen seats to the Congress's thirty out of a total of fifty seats. Dr Khan Sahib formed his government which was to last till only a few days after Independence. By 1947 events outside the NWFP altered the local political landscape. The massacres of Muslims in Bombay, Bihar and Calcutta swung the public mood away from the idea of inclusion with India. With Punjab's decision for Pakistan becoming a foregone conclusion, the geographical 'disconnection' made the concept of inclusion even more remote for the province's Congress. Accepting the new realities, the sudden demand for Pakhtunistan made at Bannu by Abdul Ghaffar Khan can be seen as a logical conclusion of the Frontier Congress' earlier championing of Pathan interests and culture. It was made, however, only three weeks before the referendum in which the Frontier Congress saw their defeat pre-ordained. The British Governor, Sir Olaf Caroe, had earlier feared a total outbreak of violence, and had pressed Delhi for new elections.

In April 1947 Mountbatten had toured NWFP to see the problem for himself. He had soon decided upon a referendum to determine the province's future. Fearing a

precedent for the Balkanization of India, the British refused to offer a referendum containing the third option of Pakhtunistan. The proposed referendum would only offer two choices: inclusion with Pakistan or inclusion with India. In spite of realizing the hopelessness of its situation, the Frontier Congress adamantly insisted on demanding the option of Pakhtunistan. Faced with Mountbatten's two option referendum, the NWFP Congress government ordered a boycott. Despite the boycott, the ninety-nine percent support given to Pakistan in the referendum terminally weakened Dr Khan Sahib's government. At the time of Independence the NWFP Muslim League had come under the new leadership of the turncoat Abdul Qayum Khan (who had been Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Central Assembly until he deserted his party just days before the announcement of the 1946 elections). He had already begun implementing schemes through which he planned to overthrow his former colleagues in government.

Balochistan was the most politically backward part of Muslim India. It was still divided in three distinct areas (British Balochistan, Kalat and the Marri-Bugti Tribal Area) and ruled by the Agent to the Governor-General, more commonly referred to as the AGG. The Muslim League was largely a one-man band consisting of a non-practicing Quetta lawyer, Qazi Isa. Isa made it abundantly clear that though he believed in the League's platform, he would not abide the presence of any other party office holder other than those appointed by himself. He wrote to Liaquat Ali Khan telling him that if other office holders were appointed, he '...would at once create an Opposition, which would not be an opposition to the cause, but to the personage so appointed'.⁶⁸ Despite Isa producing a twenty-five page Constitution for the Balochistan League, it remained a paper organization. Objections were made to the fact that not only almost all the members of Provincial League Council came from just Quetta, but also that they were all Isa's hand-picked nominees-included among them were Usman Jomezai and the brothers, Nabi Buksh and Qadir Buksh Zehri, who were local *thekadars* or contractors. As a result of an All-India Muslim League Committee's tour of NWFP which revealed a total state of dissatisfaction with the provincial party's affairs, Qazi Isa managed to get himself entrusted with the job of overhauling the NWFP League organization. His activities in the NWFP soon led to widespread criticism by some of the Leaguers in the province. One member went even so far as to suggest that 'Qazi Isa was misleading Mr. Jinnah about the strength of the League and had hardly stirred from the luxury of Dean's Hotel in Peshawar when he was supposed to be organizing the League'.⁶⁹ Eventually faced with serious discontentment against him from his own province, Isa was forced to waive his claim to be Baluchistan's League representative by the time of the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan. Despite attempts to prove to the contrary, at the time of Partition Balochistan continued to be dominated by tribal allegiances which espoused Baloch and

⁶⁸ Qazi Muhammad Isa to Liaquat Ali Khan, 16 June 1939, Balochistan Muslim League 1939-44, Vol. 293, *Freedom Movement Archives*, Karachi University, cited in Ian Talbot, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁶⁹ Ghulam Rab Khan to Jinnah. 29 August 1945, Shamsul Hasan Collections NWFP, 1:58, cited in Ian Talbot, *ibid.*, p. 15.

Pashtoon nationalism as opposed to an Indian or Pakistani one. At the time of Pakistan's creation in Balochistan, the League with the exception of Quetta, was largely nonexistent.

In Bengal the Muslim League's results in the 1937 elections were superior to any other Muslim majority area. It won thirty-nine seats. Though Congress remained the single largest party, the League successfully formed a coalition government under Fazlul Haq of the Krishak Praja Party (which had won thirty-six seats) and some of the forty-two independent Muslim members. The coalition lasted till 1941 when Fazlul Haq broke away and formed a new coalition government with the support of Hindu elements in the House. By 1943, the Muslim League strengthened by desertions from other parties, managed to form a government under Khwaja Nazimuddin. Despite intense political rivalry between Nazimuddin and Suhrawardy, the Bengal League triumphed in the 1946 provincial elections winning 115 of the Muslim seats, receiving ninety-five percent of the urban vote and eighty-four percent of the rural vote. The Bengali Muslims were briefly unified under the banner of the Muslim League on the eve of Partition before the League itself split into two. Suhrawardy headed the 'unionists' who worked to bring about a united independent Bengal, and opposed the 'divisionists' who believed in its partition.

After Partition the Muslim League now faced the daunting reality of having little genuine support in the political leadership of the western provinces which made up the new state. The first step in that direction was made by Mr. Jinnah eight days after assuming office as the Governor-General of the new nation. He dismissed Dr Khan Sahib's government in the NWFP. At the time of the referendum in the NWFP, Dr Khan Sahib had promised to resign if the referendum went in favour of Pakistan. When the referendum had gone overwhelmingly for NWFP's inclusion with Pakistan, Dr Khan Sahib went back on his word. Mr. Jinnah had then requested the Viceroy to dismiss Khan Sahib's Congress government, but Mountbatten found it difficult to go against the wishes of the Indian Congress. Clearly, on the formation of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah was left with little choice but to insist that Dr Khan Sahib keep to his word however unwillingly. Unfortunately the man chosen to lead the new government was none other than the turncoat Abdul Qayum Khan who had until recently been a 'loyal' Congressite. Qayum further betrayed his previous party by arranging the desertion of seven Khudai Khidmatgar members of the provincial assembly to the NWFP Muslim League (thereby belying the Khudai Khidmatgar's proud claim to principled politics). This incident undoubtedly reveals that political turncoats (early examples of the current *lotas*) were a popular commodity even during the short period when Mr. Jinnah was at the helm of our country's affairs.

Provincial political uncertainties continued to prevail. It would be naive to believe that at that momentous juncture of our nation's history, the natural expedient temperament of our politicians would cease, albeit briefly, in reverence of the occasion. With the

honorable exception of our founding father Mr. Jinnah, and perhaps a handful of his acolytes, the politicians of the new Pakistan had set their eyes on their personal agendas. The new central government based at Karachi was very quickly at odds with many of the provincial leaderships. In Sindh within seven months a major row broke out between the Muslim League chief minister, Khuro, and the Governor, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, over the allocation of provincial ministries. With Mr. Jinnah's blessing Khuro was dismissed.⁷⁰ Pir Illahi Buksh was made chief minister but only after he pledged loyalty to the centre. This political conflict between the Muslim League leadership at the Centre and the provincial politicians continued to bedevil the politics of the day until eventually the League itself was eclipsed by a new force.

The death of Mr. Jinnah was to prove to be a near fatal blow for the Muslim League and a great loss to the nation as a whole. Deprived of his person the League proved to be less than a sum of its parts, though it managed to stumble along for another few years under the leadership of Liaquat Ali Khan. In East Pakistan the Muslim League soon split into two when the Central Government insisted on appointing Nurul Amin as the chief minister. The disenchanted members broke away and joined Suhrawardy's Awami League. Earlier even Mr. Jinnah had misread the feelings of the Bengali Muslims by declaring Urdu as the official language of the new nation.

In Punjab Mamdot's government had become riven with internal rivalries. Shaukat Hayat and Daultana, both ministers, had threatened to resign amidst complaints against the chief minister. Mr. Jinnah summoned the three to Karachi to patch up their quarrels. Ten days after their return to Lahore they were openly bickering again. They were re-summoned to Karachi but to no avail. Daultana and Hayat both resigned in May 1948. After Mr. Jinnah's death the rivalry flared up again. This time the Centre supported Daultana. Liaquat Ali Khan visited Lahore and prevailed upon Mamdot to make peace with Daultana and accommodate him in his Cabinet. Soon after the Prime Minister's departure, Mamdot was persuaded by his advisers to change his mind. He dithered for a month before going to Karachi in October 1948 where he informed Liaquat Ali Khan of his refusal to take Daultana. Enraged, Daultana went on the warpath, and within a month he arranged, with the Centre's help, to get himself elected as president of the Provincial League. He immediately began efforts to have Mamdot dismissed from chief ministership. The political war led to near administrative anarchy as the members of the Punjab Assembly became aware of their newly found importance.

In the morning two or three MLAs would gang up and meet [Mamdot] to demand the transfer of some deputy commissioner or some district superintendent of police they disliked and if Mamdot refused they would

⁷⁰ In April 1948 the differences among the Sindh Cabinet became a scandal Mr. Jinnah requested a report from Governor Hidayatullah on the situation and then gave Khuro an opportunity to reply to the charges made against him. Not satisfied with Khuro's answers, he directed the governor to dismiss Khuro and appoint a tribunal to investigate charges made against him.

threaten to leave him and join the rival camp. This would be followed by a telegraphic transfer order. In the evening, four or five other MLAs would catch [Mamdot] and ask him to cancel the transfer orders, also threatening to join the other side if he refused. Then orders cancelling the transfer would be issued. This created a chaotic situation. When the chief secretary protested, [Mamdot's] friends advised him to transfer the chief secretary as he was Daultana's man.⁷¹

In the meantime Governor Mudie had become totally disenchanted with Mamdot's ministry and demanded its dismissal.⁷²

In January 1949, Liaquat Ali Khan used the services of the new Governor-General, Khwaja Nazimuddin, and got the Governor of Punjab to dissolve the Punjab legislature and take over the reigns of power. This was seen in Punjab as an attempt by the Urdu-speaking refugee politicians to weaken Punjab as a political force. This was further exacerbated by a feeling that the government at Karachi was reluctant to promote Punjabi civil servants or offer them key postings within the central government and central civil service. This general swell of ill feeling in the Punjab led to even Mamdot's rival, Daultana, condemning the Central government's intervention in Punjabi politics. It was this building of hatred for the Centre which would create serious problems for Liaquat Ali Khan.

The true tragedy lay in the fact that the leadership of the original Muslim League had no political base in what became Pakistan. They were Urdu-speakers and had come to the new country as refugees. Mr. Jinnah's death had to a large extent politically isolated them. Even powerful individuals such as Liaquat Ali Khan had no political support on the ground, nor did they have constituencies from which they could get themselves re-elected. Faced with hostile provinces they chose to exercise power through the Executive. Under the Government of India Act 1935, powers were heavily weighted in favor of the Central government. The Act also gave the Governor-General special powers to enforce the will of the Centre. These powers were of course meant to be exercised only as a means of last resort in exceptional circumstances. Unfortunately that was not the case in our early history, and these powers were used only too frequently. The basics of democracy in the new nation were ignored for the simple expedience of self-preservation. Governor's rule in a province meant rule by the bureaucracy. This remedy was resorted to even where elections or inter-play of party politics to resolve a crisis would have been the proper course in the democratic tradition. With the passage of time, deprived of moral support which comes from direct elections, the Muslim League high command began to lose its representative status and its claim to support from the masses.

⁷¹ Syed Nur Ahmed. *From Martial Law to Martial Law*, Vanguard, 1985, p. 299.

⁷² Mamdot had been accused of disposing of the abandoned property of Hindus and Sikhs (who had fled to India) on the corrupt basis of politic patronage.

The weakness of the central government was further reflected in the fact that Pakistan continued to be bereft of a Constitution. In comparison, the Indians had prepared their Constitution by November 1949, and promulgated it early in the following year. The enactment of the Public Representative Officers Disqualification Act of 1949 (PRODA) to subdue and punish recalcitrant politicians, was a reflection of the general disregard towards the notions of a democratic state. Sadly, Liaquat Ali Khan continued to equate the Muslim League with the nation. It might have served him well during the pre-Independence days, but a failure to tolerate and appreciate the role of the Opposition at such an early stage of our nationhood was a fateful error. He further compounded the error by remaining the President of the Muslim League despite holding the office of prime minister. This dual charge stemmed from his own political insecurities. It set a bad precedent for the power-obsessed leaders that followed. These are mistakes for which we continue to pay to this very day.

The heavy reliance by the Executive on the central bureaucracy could not help but politicize the bureaucrats. The ensuing power struggles between the Centre and the provinces deeply damaged the development of a proper political process. As the League began to lose its hold over the affairs of the country, the bureaucracy and the army - more disciplined and organized bodies - began asserting their power. Soon a complex interplay of politicians, bureaucrats and generals began to take hold. The elected representatives were by tradition answerable to Parliament. The real power now began to rest with the state and army officials who were not accountable to anyone. These state of affairs directly led to the eventual rise of unscrupulous bureaucrats like Ghulam Muhammad and Iskander Mirza, and ambitious generals such as Ayub Khan. So, as early as Liaquat Ali Khan's time, democracy had been doomed in Pakistan.

Liaquat Ali Khan paid a tragic price for his follies when he was assassinated in October 1951. The fact that the alleged assassin was accompanied by his young son when he was said to have committed the crime, roused many a suspicion. His subsequent death at the hands of a policeman (who was later promoted) moments after the assassination, added further fuel to charge of conspiracy. It was a commonly held belief at that time that Liaquat Ali Khan's murder had been schemed by a coterie of senior Punjabi bureaucrats led by Ghulam Muhammad, who had been the finance minister in Liaquat Ali Khan's Cabinet.

Within the Muslim League there had been serious inter-wing differences. In Liaquat Ali Khan's Cabinet itself these differences had led to the emergence of two groups. The Punjab group was represented by Ghulam Muhammad, and the East Pakistan group by Fazal-ur-Rehman. After Liaquat Ali Khan's death, according to Yusuf Haroon, Sirdar Abdur Rab Nishtar, who was considered by many to be the legitimate heir to Liaquat Ali Khan, had already been chosen to become the prime minister by the Muslim League high command. Nishtar was feared for his independence and forcefulness by the Punjab group, and a conspiracy was quickly entered in to thwart this move. The Punjab

group placated the East Pakistan group by agreeing to an arrangement by which a Punjabi would become governor-general and a Bengali, the prime minister. The gentle but ineffective Nazimuddin was made to step down and become the prime minister, and the Machiavellian bureaucrat Ghulam Muhammad, was made the governor-general. These conspiratorial changes in the high command set a dangerous trend for the future. The normal principles of succession were ignored and Parliament was rendered irrelevant in these important matters. The precedent that was created was that powerful groups could impose their will on a hapless country and avoid all proper constitutional procedure in doing so.

The Constituent Assembly was made up of members elected indirectly in 1947 by the members of the pre-Independence provincial assemblies. There was in essence only one party in the Assembly, the Muslim League. The only opposition therefore came from within, in the shape of different groups. East Pakistan, which had a larger population, demanded this reality be reflected in a democratic system. Punjab, which had by now begun its dominance in the West and was heavily represented in the armed services and the bureaucracy, feared this democratic logic which would involve a sharing of its authority and privileges. The growing business classes, largely then based in Karachi, were also fearful of Bengali economic control and future dominance. Not surprisingly, this conflict came to predominate the affairs of the Constituent Assembly.

In 1949 the Bengal Muslim League had adopted a resolution demanding full provincial autonomy in all matters except defence and foreign affairs. In the Constituent Assembly the Bengali group was in a dominant position, having thirty-three out of sixty Muslim League members. The opposing group had its main strength in Ghulam Muhammad, who in turn relied on the power of the army and the full support of the bureaucracy. Eventually the vested interests of the bureaucratic-military complex, aided by compliant politicians, would succeed in imposing its view. The integration of the provinces of West Pakistan into One Unit, and the forcible creation of parity with the eastern wing, was its favored solution. Thus, the leading role of the politician ended with Liaquat Ali Khan's death. After him began the period of the ascendant bureaucracy, which would last until October 1958 when the military seized control from its partner in complicity.

In January 1951 the first Pakistani commander-in-chief of the army was selected; he was General Muhammad Ayub Khan, Two more senior officers who had been tipped for that position had unluckily died in a plane crash in 1949. From the onset Ayub Khan viewed politicians with contempt, and willingly entered into an alliance with the civil bureaucracy based upon mutual convenience. Within two months of attaining his new office, he was responsible for crushing what later came to be known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy. It was an attempt by senior military officers - the first in a series of many which were to follow who believed in their own 'superior abilities' and their apparent right to overthrow an elected government and rule in its stead.

With the politicians being pushed into the background by rule of the bureaucracy under Ghulam Muhammad, the country was subjected to new levels of political chicanery and degeneracy. Political infighting and intrigue continued to dominate the western provinces while Bengal fulminated vociferously against what it believed was an attempt by the Centre to subordinate its majority population to the will of West Pakistan. In the next four years, three further provincial governments would be dismissed by the Centre: two by impositions of governor rule and one dismissed by the imposition of martial law.

In Punjab the Centre administered the province after the imposition of Governor's rule for a twenty-seven-month period until March 1951, when a new government was formed as a result of provincial elections. By this time a number of League leaders had left the party. By 1950 Mamdot had launched his Jinnah League. Others such as Mian Iftikharuddin and Shaukat Hayat⁷³ had formed the Azad Pakistan Party. The Punjab Muslim League, now headed by Daultana, proposed in its manifesto sweeping radical reforms favoring the rural downtrodden against the might of the entrenched zamindars. The Opposition, which was an uneasy alliance between Mamdot's Jinnah League, Suhrawardy's Awami League and Maulana Maudoodi's Jamaati-Islami were unable to agree to counter the League's manifesto with an imaginative and convincing programme. Daultana's political expediency came to the fore when the majority of party tickets were issued to members of the landed gentry - the very people his rural reforms were meant to be targeting. Out of 191 seats, the Muslim League captured 140 on election night, later its numbers were increased to 153 as a number of independent members hurriedly joined the new government. Amidst suspicions of fraud, the League's resounding success placed Daultana in a strong position. His Cabinet consisted wholly of landlords with one exception who was thought to be a nonentity. The radical rural reforms were now, not surprisingly, completely watered down.

Despite the timidity of the Punjab government's eventual rural reforms, the *zamindars* continued to bitterly oppose them. Their resistance led to a partial withholding of wheat from the urban areas. Faced with wheat shortages, and combined with a growing acrimony towards the Centre - for its supposed bias against Punjabis - the urban classes of the Punjab were becoming increasingly resentful. Using this opportunity to emerge from their post-Partition political obscurity, the Ahrarsa - a religious group which until recently had opposed the creation of Pakistan and reviled Mr. Jinnah as the 'Kafir-i-Azam' - staged a political come-back. Their demand to declare the Ahmedis as non-Muslims had proven appeal to the religious orthodoxies of the people and soon gained widespread support. The Ahrars membership was said by some to be no more than 1064⁷⁴ but their immense impact supports the view that Daultana also encouraged the

⁷³ Shaukat Hayat Khan was to return to the Muslim League a few years later.

⁷⁴ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, Vanguard Books, 1990, p. citing *The Munir Report*, p. 52.

movement, using it to browbeat the Centre to submit to Punjab's economic and constitutional demands. In July 1952 the Punjab League passed a resolution firmly supporting the anti-Ahmedi movement by a vote of 264 to 8. In February 1953 the Centre decided to arrest the prominent leaders of the Ahrar movement, a move which caused Punjab to go up in flames. Encouraged by the Punjab government, who wished to weaken the central government, the orthodox fury spread to Karachi and other parts of the country. Angered crowds vented their rage at Ahmedis in places as far distant as Quetta. In March 1953 martial law was declared in Lahore under the command of General Azam which brought about the end of Daultana's government. Feroz Khan Noon was appointed as the new chief minister.

In Bengal the Centre's insistence on appointing Nurul Amin as chief minister had already split the Bengali League. Further mistrust of the Centre had led to a unanimous feeling among all political parties (including the Bengali Muslim League) that West Pakistan wished to dominate their province. Crowds had begun to gravitate to public meetings held by Opposition leaders such as Suhrawardy and Maulana Bashani. In January 1952 Nazimuddin visited Dhaka as prime minister and declared at a meeting that Urdu would be the national language. His statement was met with widespread protests culminating in a call for a general strike on 21 February. The government declared a ban on public meeting and processions. On the day of the strike the police opened fire on some demonstrators killing four students. For the sake of self-preservation, the provincial Muslim League passed a resolution within twenty-four hours of the incident, requesting the Constituent Assembly to declare Bengali a state language. It had little effect. When elections were held, the League was trounced. It managed to win only 10 seats in a house of 309; even its leader Nurul Amin suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of a student leader. The United Front Party, which had triumphed by winning 223 seats, formed a government under Fazlul Haq on 3 April 1954. Fazlul Haq was soon accused of advocating secessionism and failing to maintain law and order. Industrial disorder had spread through the province and a riot had taken place at a jute mill in which 400 people had been killed. In less than two months of taking power, Fazlul Haq's government was dismissed and governor's rule was imposed in Bengal. The new governor was none other than the federal defence secretary, Iskander Mirza.

Unlike other provinces, politics in Sindh continued to be little more than a power struggle between rival political personalities and their factions. During this period Khuro, despite his dismissal from chief ministership, had emerged as the most powerful and ruthlessly cunning of all Sindhi politicians (until, of course, the subsequent emergence of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto). In deciding an election petition against an assembly member⁷⁵ the court, in January 1949, disqualified both the member and his election agent. The election agent was none other than Chief Minister Pir Illahi Buksh, who not

⁷⁵ Qazi Muhammad Akbar who had defeated G. M. Syed in the 1946.

only had to suddenly leave the Assembly, but also had to vacate his chief ministership. Khuro - who could not contest himself due to the cases registered against him - put Yusuf Haroon forward for the job. As Haroon was not a member of the Provincial Assembly, Khuro arranged for him to get elected in the by-election in Sukkur. He got Haroon appointed as chief minister, ensuring that three of his nominees were made ministers.

The special tribunal found Khuro guilty and barred him from holding government office for three years. Shortly after, in the second case, the court awarded him a punishment of two years in jail. Khuro filed his appeal against the sentence of imprisonment and managed to win it. He soon reassumed his presidentship of the League which had been kept in abeyance by arrangement. This was followed by a naked attempt to dominate the government by the use of regular instructions sent to Chief Minister Yusuf Haroon.⁷⁶ Resentful of this state of affairs, in November 1949 Haroon shuffled his Cabinet by dismissing all three of Khuro's men. Angered by the chief minister's action, Khuro engineered a vote of no-confidence which Haroon realized he would lose. Haroon quickly capitulated, and after consulting Khuro formed a new Cabinet which included three of Khuro's men.

Within a few months the Sindh Chief Court (now known as the Sindh High Court) held that the special tribunal which had barred Khuro from holding office was unconstitutional. Soon after, Khuro jubilantly re-entered the Assembly. Chief Minister Haroon faced reality by tendering his resignation and accepting a diplomatic post, that of high commissioner to Australia. In May 1950, Haroon had been replaced by Khuro's aide, Qazi Fazlullah. By March 1951 Khuro was directly in power having replaced his aide Fazlullah, where he skillfully opposed all moves to implement the rural tenancy reform bill. He also began intriguing against a Sindhi rival in the central Cabinet, Abdus Sattar Pirzada, the minister for food. But very soon he found himself facing a revolt encouraged by Pirzada, within his own Cabinet. Three ministers, including his erstwhile aide Qazi Fazlullah, helped instigate some sixty charges under PRODA against him. Khuro retaliated by bringing similar charges against his opponents. The affairs of the Sindh Muslim League had now degenerated into chaos as the party had split into two feuding factions. On 29 December 1951 governor's rule was imposed in Sindh, and Khuro was dismissed as chief minister for the second time in three years. Eventually at the end of the Centre's direct rule in 1953, Abdus Sattar Pirzada was made chief minister. But within a year Pirzada's opposition to the power Troika's (Ghulam Muhammad, Ayub Khan, Iskander Mirza) One Unit scheme led to his dismissal.⁷⁷ In

⁷⁶ With Liaquat Ali Khan's backing, Haroon was making a doomed attempts at introducing agrarian reforms against the wishes of the majority landowning members of the Assembly.

⁷⁷ Abdus Sattar Pirzada did not stay loyal to his anti-One Unit principles very long. In May 1956, in the midst of the Muslim League's struggle survival against the newly formed pro-One Unit Republican Party, Pirzada ditched his League colleagues overnight and accepted a ministership offered to him in the new Republican Party government formed under Dr. Khan Sahib's chief ministership.

November 1954 the wily Khuro was once more back in as chief minister, with Ghulam Muhammad having dismissed the pending charges of disqualification under PRODA against him. He continued in his post until the establishment of One Unit in West Pakistan.

In the NWFP the Centre was totally outwitted by Abdul Qayum Khan. The Muslim League high command, and its bureaucratic successor, which dominated provincial politics playing the role of a powerful broker between warring provincial factions, was rendered ineffective. After becoming chief minister in 1947 at Mr. Jinnah's intercession, Qayum Khan began to ruthlessly suppress all opposition he encountered. He broke the grip that the Congress had over the Pathans and soon established himself as the supreme overlord of NWFP. In total command, Qayum was able to introduce agrarian reforms. He abolished *jagirs*, built roads and schools, and funded projects such as hydro-electric works and a new Peshawar University. His critics maintained that his policies were intended to consolidate his own personal position, which was probably true. He had made the League irrelevant in NWFP politics. In the 1951 elections the Centre tried to fight back. The Centre's proxies were Khan Muhammad Ibrahim of Jhagra, a member of the central League's working committee and secretary of its parliamentary board, and Yusuf Khattak, the general secretary of the Pakistan Muslim League. But Qayum Khan outfoxed them in this battle between the local and central Leagues. As head of the provincial parliamentary board, he rejected all applications for party tickets from the Jhagra-Khattak faction. A strong protest led to an appeal to the central parliamentary board which led to the reinstatement of eighteen candidates. With the provincial government's machinery at his command, Qayum set up his own men to oppose these candidates as independents. Sensing defeat all the eighteen League candidates withdrew from the

fight, along with over one hundred other candidates. Not surprisingly Qayum and his men romped in, officially winning seventy-six of a total of eighty-five seats. A further four independents and a solitary non-Muslim joined up with them soon after. Qayum's position was unassailable, and there was little the Centre could do about it. He remained the chief minister until 1953 when Ghulam Muhammad dismissed Nazimuddin from the prime ministership. Fearing that Qayum Khan might support the ousted prime minister, the governor-general made him a member of the central Cabinet. It was an offer Qayum Khan could not resist as he had ambitions of becoming prime minister. He was succeeded by his nominee Sardar Abdul Rashid (a former inspector-general of police of NWFP), and the Centre finally managed to gain control of NWFP politics. In 1955, despite instructions from the Centre to win support for the One Unit in the Provincial Assembly, Rashid Khan failed. The NWFP League members in the Assembly unanimously voted against the One Unit. He was abruptly dismissed by the Karachi government and Sardar Bahadur Khan, General Ayub's brother, was brought in as replacement.

At the Centre, Khwaja Nazimuddin lasted as prime minister for only eighteen months. During his tenure he faced several crises. He had managed to survive the problems caused by a serious food shortage within the country in the summer of 1952, followed by financial crisis as a result of a severe depletion of foreign exchange reserves, and had even seen through the violent chaos of the anti-Ahmedi rioting. In the end his opponents in the bureaucratic-military alliance proved too strong for him. At a meeting held in Karachi the prime minister met with verbal abuse at the hands of General Ayub Khan and senior civil servants in the presence of the governor-general.⁷⁸ In April 1953 supported by Ayub Khan and the defence secretary, Iskander Mirza, the governor-general ordered Nazimuddin to resign. He refused to do so and was therefore dismissed. The fact that Nazimuddin commanded a majority in the Legislature - the budget had recently been passed - was treated with arrogant contempt that mocked the basic principles of democratic government and Parliament. The dismissal also demolished the well-established tradition of impartiality on part of the governor-general. The fact that Nazimuddin's undemocratically selected successor (Muhammad Ali Bogra who was then ambassador to the United States) soon obtained a majority vote in the Assembly, spoke little for the integrity of the majority of the legislators who so quickly reversed their positions. Also, Ayub Khan's role in this event signaled the openly forceful entry of the army into interfering with democratic politics. It was a sad day for Pakistan.

A federal constitution with a Bengali majority in the legislature was an anathema to the bureaucratic-military establishment. This put them on a collision course with the legislature. Requiring a quiescent replacement for Nazimuddin they selected a civil servant for the job. Muhammad Ali Bogra was summoned from the US and made prime minister and also president of the Muslim League. Noticeably, Bogra, was not chosen by the people nor did he represent any political party, but was the personal choice of Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad. The new man was soon faced with the immense task of dealing with the looming constitutional deadlock. The drubbing that the Muslim League took in the March 1954 East Bengal provincial elections buffeted the Centre, and the proposal to integrate all the provinces in the western wing into a single administrative division - the concept of One Unit - soon began to take shape. In September 1954, despite the support of a large number of the Punjabi contingent, the Muslim League's Constituent Assembly members voted overwhelmingly against the proposal calling for the unification of West Pakistan.

The Constituent Assembly seemed to brush off last minute attempts by Ghulam Muhammad's proxies, such as Feroz Khan Noon, to delay the accord that was being reached on the new constitution. Faced with the end to his monopoly of power, it was rumored that the governor-general was intending to file PRODA charges against

⁷⁸ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, op. cit., 1990, p. 178.

twenty-two Assembly members.⁷⁹ It has even been suggested that 'the climax was reached when the governor-general hinted to the Prime Minister himself that he could become a victim of PRODA'.⁸⁰ The Assembly responded, on 20 September, by repealing the Public and Representative Officers (Disqualification) Act (PRODA), leaving pending charges under the Act unaffected.⁸¹ The following day the Assembly further curtailed Ghulam Muhammad's powers by amending the Government of India Act to preclude the governor-general from acting except on the advice of his ministers (as was the practice in other Commonwealth dominions). Further, not only was the Cabinet made collectively responsible to the Assembly, all ministers were to be members of the Assembly at the time of their selection and could only continue to hold their office so long as they retained the confidence of the legislature. Reacting to these moves *Dawn* carried bold headlines announcing 'Parliament made Supreme Body'.⁸²

On 21 September the Constituent Assembly also voted its approval of a draft constitution. The proposed constitution had adopted Chaudhry Muhammad Ali's formula for parliamentary representation. It provided that the lower house was to consist of three hundred members elected on basis of population, and the upper house would consist of fifty members equally divided among the five units, who would be elected by the legislatures of the units. East Bengal's majority in the lower house, on the basis of its population, would be balanced by its minority in the upper house. Provision was also made for a Prime Minister who was to appoint the other ministers in a Cabinet collectively responsible to Parliament and remain in office only so long as they retained the confidence of parliament. Politically, the most significant aspect of the draft constitution was the power of the President (as the constitution called for a republic the office of the governor-general had undergone a change in nomenclature) was reduced to a mere figurehead. He could only act on the advice of his ministers.⁸³

While all the Assembly members from Punjab had abstained from voting on the draft constitution, within a passage of a few short weeks they had come to realize that they would have to live with the new constitution.⁸⁴ According to Ayesha Jalal 'the Punjabi group ... was seen to have lost influence and clearly regarded the blow at the Governor-General as a blow at itself'.⁸⁵ Having scheduled the Assembly's vote on the constitution for 28 October, Prime Minister Bogra confidently departed for a diplomatic mission to the United States. His trip was cut short when he was recalled to Pakistan by Ghulam Muhammad. When Bogra landed at Karachi airport he was, according to newspaper

⁷⁹ Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, Oxford, Karachi, 1996, p. 123.

⁸⁰ Leonard Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1963, p. 357.

⁸¹ Within weeks Ghulam Muhammad would pardon influential politicians as Daultana and Khuro charged under PRODA simply to enlist their services against the Constituent Assembly and the proposed new constitution.

⁸² *Dawn*, Karachi, 22 September 1954.

⁸³ Section 63, Draft Constitution of Pakistan, Confidential, Manager of Government Press, Karachi, 1954.

⁸⁴ Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁸⁵ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

reports, 'met by the largest crowd since those that had greeted the popular Liaquat Ali Khan'.⁸⁶ Bogra managed to assure the cheering crowds that the new constitution would be in effect by 25 December, before 'he was hustled into a car by a couple of Pakistani generals and taken straight to the governor-general's house'.⁸⁷ The presence of the generals provided clear evidence of the army's partisan role in the looming political showdown.

The retaliation was swift in coming. On 24 October Ghulam Muhammad proclaimed that 'the constitutional machinery had broken down ... [and the] Constituent Assembly had lost the confidence of the people and can no longer function'.⁸⁸ The governor-general had effectively dissolved the Assembly. Later he enforced a ban on all public meetings for a two month period and imposed Press Censorship. The army high command's close involvement in dismissal of the Assembly was further evident when troops were moved into the city from Malir in readiness for potential disorder even before Ghulam Muhammad's proclamation was published.⁸⁹ On 28 October a meeting of the new Cabinet selected by Ghulam Muhammad was convened at the governor-general's place and it was announced that the governor-general-and not Prime Minister Bogra - would preside future Cabinet meetings.

Retaining Bogra as the nominal prime minister, the governor-general appointed a so-called 'cabinet of talent'. Real power was commanded by only two men among them: the arch bureaucrat, Iskander Mirza became the interior minister, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army General Ayub Khan, a serving officer, finally came out openly into the political field to become the minister for defence. Neither of these men had ever received a mandate from the public whose future now largely rested in their hands. The foremost task before this ministry was the creation of West Pakistan into a single unit.

The One Unit scheme was pushed through the recalcitrant NWFP and Sindh Assemblies by force of arbitrary dismissals. Towards end October 1954 the Sindh Chief Minister Pirzada was able to produce a statement opposing the One Unit scheme signed by 74 out of the 110 members of the Sindh Assembly. He was abruptly dismissed and replaced by the Centre by the ever ruthless Ayub Khuro. Within a fortnight the very same Assembly cowardly reversed itself, and passed a resolution approving the One Unit by 100 votes to 4. Having roped in the services of other self-serving politicians such as Daultana in Punjab and Yusuf Khattak in NWFP, Iskander Mirza enlisted the services of H. S. Suhrawardy. Suhrawardy, the leader of the Awami League (who had previously vehemently opposed the concept of political parity between the two wings

⁸⁶ *Dawn*, Karachi, 24 October 1954.

⁸⁷ Acting British High Commissioner J. D. Murray to secretary of state [CRO], 10 December 1954, Dominion Officer Papers, DO135 series/ 5406, Public Records office, London (cited in: Ayesha Jalal, *The State Martial Rule*, *op. cit.*, p. 192, footnote 178).

⁸⁸ *Dawn*, Karachi, 25 October 1954.

⁸⁹ Acting British High Commissioner J. D. Murray to secretary of state [CRO], 10 December 1954, *op. cit.*

as envisaged by the One Unit scheme) was made the law minister at the centre, thereby ensuring that all opposition to the concept of One Unit was doomed.

One man, the governor-general, now controlled the government. His accumulation of complete power was challenged by Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan, the Speaker of the Constituent Assembly, who filed a petition in the High Court of Sindh (then Chief Court) challenging the dismissal of the Assembly.⁹⁰ Just when it seemed that the autocrat had won, Chief Justice Sir George Constantine and Justice Buksh Memon delivered a constitutional broadside against the governor-general. The judges declared that 'the Constituent Assembly was a Sovereign body' and the governor-general had no power of any kind to dissolve it. In one bold stroke Ghulam Muhammad's *coup* had been rendered illegal. The worried governor-general quickly appealed the decision in the Supreme Court (then Federal Court).

Ghulam Muhammad was now determined not to leave anything to chance. According to his private secretary, while the appeal was pending in the Supreme Court, Ghulam Muhammad began exchanging coded written messages with Chief Justice Muhammad Munir making it clear to him the result he desired.⁹¹ On at least one occasion, ignoring all judicial propriety, the governor-general 'drove to Munir's residence in his official car with flags flying and escort'.⁹² There is a strongly held belief that Munir 'assured the Government in advance that he would upset ... [the Sindh High Court's] judgment when it went before him...'.⁹³ When the partial chief justice heard the governor-general's appeal against the High Court's decision it was a most unfortunate day in the judicial history of our country.⁹⁴ It is also widely suspected that Munir even manipulated the composition of the bench to suit the governor-general.⁹⁵ Having already made up his mind, Munir resorted to specious and incomplete legal reasoning to support his decision favoring the governor-general's case. His protégés Justices Muhammad Sharif

⁹⁰ Fearing arrest by the police stationed at the courthouse, Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan disguised himself as a burka-clad woman to file the petition. Once the police discovered the petition had been filed, they attempted to forcibly recover it from the Registrar who had already passed it on. This incident led Chief Justice Sir George Constantine to send a warning to the Inspector-General of Police that any further interference would be treated as contempt of court.

⁹¹ Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁹³ *Dawn*, 9 August 1986. (In an article by Sultan Ahmed, the former editor of the newspaper).

⁹⁴ Later Chief Justice Munir would endorse Ayub Khan's seizure of power by introducing the novel 'doctrine of necessity' to justify it. Many years later it was revealed - in the 1972 Asma Jilani case - that Munir had played a leading role in the drafting of the Laws Order (Continuance in Force) of 1958 which deprived Pakistanis of their fundamental rights. This man, who proved to be a blight on our legal system was, not surprisingly, made Ayub Khan's first Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs when the 1962 Constitution came into effect. If a man ever right deserved to be tried for contempt of court (for his blatant disrespect for the independence of our judicial system) it was former Chief Justice Munir.

⁹⁵ Justice Shahabuddin, a strong-minded judge whose previous judicial rulings seemed to favor the Assembly's position on appeal, was unexpectedly sent to temporarily fill the office of Governor of East Bengal, contrary to the established practice of having the local Chief Justice of the High Court fill in for an absent governor.

and S. A. Rehman, as expected, fell in behind to support him.⁹⁶ It was believed by the Constituent Assembly's legal team that the fourth judge, Justice Akram, aware that Munir held the majority with him was now inclined not to oppose him. In the end it was left to Justice A. R. Cornelius to make a lone principled stand on a solid foundation of judicial reasoning and legal precedence. When, on 21 March 1955, Munir issued the court's majority decision upholding Ghulam Muhammad's dismissal of the Constituent Assembly, in the words of a legal scholar, 'it devastated the political structure of Pakistan'.⁹⁷ It has since been called '... a momentous ruling, one from which Pakistan has never fully recovered'.⁹⁸

Three weeks after making the brazen judicial decision Chief Justice Munir seemed to have suffered from serious afterthoughts and insisted in a subsequent judgment that his earlier decision had been 'grievously misunderstood'.⁹⁹ Using this new opportunity the judge tried to make up for his past sins by declaring that the governor-general could not make law and that he should bring in a new constituent assembly into existence as soon as possible.

Deprived of the opportunity to nominate their own constituent 'assembly' and do away with the political process, the troika decided upon an eighty-member new constituent assembly. As the new members were to be indirectly elected by the provincial assemblies, it was therefore necessary for the troika to control these assemblies. In Punjab, Chief Minister Feroz Khan Noon refused to let the Centre's Pakistan Muslim League's parliamentary board select the majority of the new representatives. He was sacked and replaced by the compliant Abdul Hamid Dasti. Khuro was allowed to crack the whip in Sindh according to the instructions given to him. In NWFP Dr. Khan Sahib's opposition was checked by buying him out with the promise of making him the first chief minister of West Pakistan. In part this was also done to allay the fear in the minority provinces of domination by the Punjab. Iskander Mirza knew Dr Khan Sahib well from his days in the 1930s as the Deputy Commissioner at Peshawar when they often played bridge together. By this act the Centre effectively disenfranchised Balochistan by forcibly electing the eager Dr Khan Sahib from the solitary seat reserved for that province. Despite this flagrant abuse of the Centre's authority, the Muslim League failed to secure a majority in the new Constituent Assembly; it won only twenty-six seats. Even this cosmetic form of 'democracy' led to inconveniences. Bogra was replaced by Chaudhry Muhammad Ali and by now the almost completely incapacitated Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad, who was recovering from a stroke, was finally forced out and replaced by Iskander Mirza, who soon became the President under the new Constitution. The country was now ruled by a 'duumvirate' of Iskander Mirza and General Ayub Khan.

⁹⁶ Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, op. cit, p. 197.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁹⁸ Ayesha Jalal, in *D. A. Low's Constitutional Heads and Political Crisis*, Macmillan, London, 1988, p. 140.

⁹⁹ *Usif Patel and two others v. the Crown*, P.L.D., 1955, F.C., 387.

Not much can be said for the 1956 Constitution as it only lasted for two years. Despite the Constitution providing for a parliamentary system with a titular president, it did little to curtail what had become by now the established tradition of direct intervention by the Head of State. It has been suggested that Iskander Mirza had never outgrown his earlier role of a Political Agent in the NWFP, his training and experience had resulted from indulging in the old British Frontier policy of playing one tribe against another.¹⁰⁰ As a result of the recent elections there was no majority party in the Assembly; the president who had supporters in several parties, could now play one politician against another. This was a period of unprincipled intrigues, opportunism and power-obsessed rivalries. The period saw the inauguration of the new republican party. 'With both [President] Mirza and [Governor of West Pakistan] Gurmani acting as midwives, Khan Sahib announced the birth of the Republican Party, a misnomer for a collection of League dissidents and others attracted by the magnetic pull of power and promises of land grants, route permits, licenses and other such nostrums.'¹⁰¹

During this period Pakistan had five prime ministers. Bogra who was followed by Chaudhry Muhammad Ali in August 1955, was himself replaced in September 1956 by Suhrawardy¹⁰² (who relied on the support of the Establishment's Republican Party rather than his own Awami League).¹⁰³ Suhrawardy is believed to have embarked on a plan to develop mutual understanding between Punjab and East Pakistan to achieve some sort of political stability before the next elections. As this represented an implied threat to Iskander Mirza's power, he was dismissed as prime minister in October 1957.¹⁰⁴ I. I. Chundrigar was briefly prime minister for two months before he himself was replaced by Feroz Khan Noon. Much to Iskander Mirza's dismay, Noon is supposed to have reached an understanding with Suhrawardy that he would be supported by him for the post of president after the next elections. The nadir of Iskander Mirza's rule took place in East Pakistan, when during a no-confidence motion there was a vicious physical assault on the deputy speaker who subsequently died of his injuries. By the latter half of 1958 both wings of the country were in political turmoil. It is thought that Iskander Mirza realized that his chances of remaining president after the next elections looked bleak, as most politicians by now had one thing in common:

¹⁰⁰ K. B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, Oxford, 1967. p. 89

¹⁰¹ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, op. cit., p. 231.

¹⁰² Suhrawardy, along with twenty Awami League and the Hindu Congress members from East Pakistan, staged a walkout from the Constituent Assembly at the time of the final vote on the 1956 Constitution and declared his party's disassociation from the Constitution because he claimed East Pakistan was not being given a fair deal and 'due' autonomy was not guaranteed. Yet some six months later this 'pillar of democracy and advocate of East Pakistani rights had assumed the office of prime minister under the very same Constitution and even went as far to say that the Constitution guaranteed '98 percent of Provincial autonomy', Hassan Askari Rizvi, *The Military & Politics in Pakistan, 1947-86*, Progressive Publishers, Lahore, (3rd edition) 1986, p. 50.

¹⁰³ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military & Politics in Pakistan*, ibid., p. 54

¹⁰⁴ K. B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, Oxford, 1967, p. 91 (Sayeed maintains that this was also why Mushtaq Gurmani was dismissed as Governor of West Pakistan.)

no one wanted Iskander Mirza to be re-elected to the presidency. By October 1958 the president dealt a death blow to the politicians by declaring martial law appointing Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator, and abrogating the Constitution.

With the declaration of martial law, real political power had slipped into the hands of the army. Within twenty days Ayub Khan validated reality by overthrowing his partner. President Mirza was forced at pistol point to board an airplane to England. The military now ruled the country under the sole dictatorship of an ambitious general. Ayub Khan had been commander-in-chief since January 1951. His tenure, which had previously been extended by Iskander Mirza, was due to expire in January 1959. It would not be unfair to suggest that in seizing power, despite Ayub Khan's protestations to the contrary, the General was also motivated by personal considerations. It is revealing that Ayub Khan himself stated - during the few days Iskander Mirza was still in power - that he had told Mirza, 'Are you going to act or are you not going to act? It is your responsibility to bring about change, and if you do not, which heaven forbid, we shall force a change.'¹⁰⁵ It is apparent that the two men were keen to implement martial law as it suited both their private agendas. In the end Iskander Mirza had backed himself into a corner, and martial law had placed all power in the hands of the commander-in-chief of the army.

* * *

In 1954 I travelled abroad, this time accompanied by my friend Akbar Bugti. Apart from the mandatory visit to England, this time I ventured to the Scandinavian countries. I had previously visited Helsinki for the Summer Olympics of 1952, but this time I also visited Sweden, and Norway. I returned a few weeks earlier than Akbar, who had a more extended stay. It was when I went to the Karachi Airport to receive Akbar that I first made my acquaintance with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

At the airport terminal while I waited for Akbar, I noticed an elderly man being pushed on a wheelchair by a younger man. A few moments later the younger man walked up to me and asked if I was Sherbaz Mazari. When I answered in the affirmative, he told me that his father wished to have a word with me. When I walked over to the elderly man he addressed me as beta and introduced himself as Shah Nawaz Bhutto, and pointing to the young man who had come over to me, said, 'And this is my son, Zulfi.' I soon learnt that Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto accompanied by his son was on his way abroad for treatment. The elderly gentleman insisted that I have dinner with him once he returned. He intimated that he had known Sir Bahram Khan Mazari and wished to know me better.

¹⁰⁵ *The Pakistan Times*, October 10, 1958.

True to his word, shortly after Shah Nawaz Bhutto returned, I received a telephone call from Zulfikar inviting me over for dinner at his father's behest. And it was at that dinner that Shah Nawaz related the story of his meeting with the earlier Mazari chief in 1922. He said the meeting was prompted by the British Governor at Bombay - at the time Sindh was still part of the Bombay Presidency - whom the elder Bhutto had called upon with regard to some work. When the Governor learnt that Shah Nawaz Bhutto was on his way to Delhi, he suggested that he meet with Sir Bahram Khan who he said, would be present at the imperial capital for the durbar that was being held for the visiting Prince of Wales. The Governor had a high opinion of the elderly Baloch Sirdar and felt that Bhutto would benefit from meeting him. When Bhutto reached Delhi, he said, it was crowded with camps set up by the various maharajahs, rulers and chiefs of British India. After searching around he finally found the Mazari camp among the multitude of other temporary settlements. At the entrance he noticed a number of men attired in the simple white clothes and turbans that made up the Baloch dress. He informed them formally that he wished to pay a call on Nawab Sir Bahram Khan, Chief of the Mazaris. Much to his surprise, as he told me later, one of the men replied in broken Urdu, 'You wish to see our Bahram?' The man then led him to the largest tent in which half a dozen turbaned men were sitting cross-legged on a Persian carpet conversing with each other in low voices. One of them, who was sitting in the middle, addressed Shah Nawaz Bhutto as 'young man' and asked him to join them on the carpet. Bhutto sat on the carpet rather uncomfortably (he mentioned to me that he had been wearing a rather closely fitted suit fashionable in those days). He soon found out that the simply attired man who had addressed him was the man he had been seeking. When the Chief learnt the reason for Bhutto's visit he said modestly, 'I'm Bahrain.' Thirty years later, Shah Nawaz Bhutto confided to me that he had been totally overwhelmed by Bahram Khan. I recall him saying that at that time everyone in Delhi was dressing themselves in ornate uniforms and jewels in preparation for the Royal Visit. The sight of a Baloch chief dressed in traditional plain white flowing robes, in total disregard of the local commotion, made for a very dignified appearance. Bhutto had expected that at the very least a member of the Executive Council of the Central Legislature and President of Punjab's Chief Association, as Bahram Khan was, would affect lordly airs, but instead it proved to be the opposite. Bahram chatted with Bhutto for twenty minutes or so and seemed to have left a vivid imprint in the elderly Bhutto's memory that lasted more than three decades. 'That is the reason,' he told me, 'when I heard someone call out your name at the airport, I wanted to meet you.'

That was the first of the several meals I was to have at the Bhutto residence. In time I got to know Zulfikar, or Zulfi as he was then commonly known, quite well. Indeed, for a number of years we were even very good friends. Zulfi would drop in at my home at regular intervals in the mornings. We were both avid book collectors and had a youthful weakness for fine clothes. Occasionally we would dine at Le Gourmet together. He did not seem to have many friends at that time, and would often confide in me about his ambitions in life. The death of his elder brother, Imdad Ali, had left him as

heir to his father's political legacy. His great ambition in those days was to become a member of the Sindh Provincial Assembly in the 1958 elections. His home town of Larkana was then in the strong political grip of the Sindhi politician, Ayub Khuro, a man Zulfikar Bhutto had come to detest, becoming abusive at the very mention of Khuro's name. As long as Khuro controlled Larkana, Bhutto had little chance of attaining even meager political success.

Bhutto's obsessive hatred of Khuro was also linked to an earlier incident which continued to rankle with him. One day he related the event to me. It appeared that upon his return from completing his education abroad, his father, Sir Shah Nawaz, took him to call on Ayub Khuro, chief minister of Sindh, with the intention of seeking a position in the foreign service for his son. Khuro made the senior Bhutto and his son wait outside on the verandah for a lengthy half hour. Later when the two were seated with Khuro in his drawing room, Ayub Khuro slighted them by drinking tea without offering them any. Swallowing his pride, Sir Shah Nawaz introduced his son to Khuro, and emphasizing on his degrees from Berkeley and Oxford, requested the Sindhi politician for a job for him in the foreign service. Khuro listened to the request and asked the elder Bhutto to submit an application in writing to him. He then dismissed them cursorily with a wave of his hand. While recounting the story, Bhutto could not help but sprinkle the entire tale with expletives directed at Khuro. That was the nature of the man I was getting to know. Later in 1972 as soon as he achieved power as the Chief Martial Law Administrator, one of his first acts was to humiliate Khuro by having the walls to his house at Larkana razed to the ground. Cowed into submission, Ayub Khuro and members of his family soon joined Bhutto's People's Party. At the time I recall Bhutto gleefully commenting, 'The so-called iron man of Sindh turned out to be no more than a man of straw'.

At times Bhutto's sensitivity reached absurd levels. He often took umbrage at the merest perception of a slight and never forgave or forgot them. Ahmed Nawaz Bugti related an incident to me which in his mind had been so minor that he had completely forgotten about it until Bhutto chose to remind him of it in a bizarre fashion. In the mid-fifties Ahmed Nawaz was hosting a table for some foreign ladies at Le Gourmet. Zulfi Bhutto, who was present at the restaurant, spotted him and asked if he could join the group. Knowing Bhutto's reputation with women, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti declined. Many years later, Bhutto visited Quetta during his days as president to attend a formal dinner held by Governor Bizenjo for Princess Ashraf of Iran at the Quetta Club. Seated at the high table, he sighted Ahmed Nawaz, who was then Balochistan's finance minister, dining at a less august table than his. Bhutto sent his ADC to bring the brother of the Bugti Chief to his presence. Surprised at the sudden summons, Ahmed Nawaz walked up to the high table and to the seated president. Bhutto looked at Ahmed Nawaz Bugti and said, 'Do you remember the time when you wouldn't let me sit at your table? Well this time I won't let you sit at mine.'

Bhutto was a complex man. Despite his extremely sensitive nature, he also practiced when he had to, the sycophancy which has become the hallmark of the successful Pakistani politician. I witnessed a curious incident which serves to illustrate this: In 1957 I received an invitation out of the blue from Jam Sadiq Ali, whom until then I had never met, to a lunch in honor of Pir Pagaro. Bhutto, who had also been invited, later telephoned me and suggested that we drive to the lunch together. As we headed in my car to Jam Sadiq's house - which was then located in the vicinity of Gurumandir - Bhutto talked disparagingly about Pir Pagaro and his family. He related past scandals about the Pir's father's sexual preferences and the man's eventual execution by the British on a charge of murder. He lambasted the present Pir for being no more than a pleasure loving sybarite devoid of concern for his followers. Imagine my amazement when on reaching Jam Sadiq's house, I witnessed Bhutto bow before Pir Pagaro and suppliantly touch his knees with both his hands. As I stared at him in surprise, he turned his head covertly and winked at me. Later as we drove away from the lunch, he shrugged off his servile behavior with a laugh. You had to do that, he said, if you wanted to get ahead in politics.

Like so many ambitious men, Bhutto was keen to meet and establish contact with men of influence who would be able to help him in his quest, which then, as I have mentioned earlier, was to become a member of the provincial parliament. One evening at Le Gourmet in 1956, as Bhutto's guest, I came across Hamid Ali Noon, who was then a captain in the army. Hamid, who had been at school with me, saw me at Bhutto's table and came over to say hello. When Bhutto subsequently learnt from me that Hamid not only happened to be Sir Feroz Khan Noon's son-in-law but was also the adjutant of the President's Bodyguards, he insisted that I not only introduce him to Hamid, but also that I should invite him to join our table as Bhutto's guest.

The path to Bhutto's initial political success came largely from cultivating powerful people. In Larkana he sought the assistance of Khuro's erstwhile aide and political rival, Qazi Fazlullah. Using his social links with the Irani community, he got himself introduced to the powerful bureaucrat Iskander Mirza, the rising kingmaker of Pakistani politics. The manner in which he won over Mirza's affection was through the timeworn Sindh feudal tradition of hosting *shikars* for the powerful personages of the day and by expeditious use of downright sycophancy. In early 1957 I was also a guest at one of Bhutto's *shikars*.

In February 1957 there was a grand function at Guddu when the foundation stone of the newly planned barrage was laid by President Iskander Mirza. The barrage had been built on our family lands in Sindh, and thus it was somewhat incumbent on me to be present at the proceedings. Among those present on the occasion were Mir Jaffar Khan Jamali, the veteran Muslim Leaguer, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. In the absence of my elder brother, I was asked to join the president's luncheon table as the senior representative of the area. After lunch Mir Jaffar Khan spotted me there and invited me to accompany

him home as his guest to Rojhan Jamali for an overnight stay. While I was talking to Mir Jaffar Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto joined us. He seemed quite eager to learn as to how I came to be present at the Presidential table. During the usual friendly chat that followed, he invited me to a shoot the following day at his home town of Larkana. He told me that he had arranged the *shikar* for the US ambassador and members of his family who were arriving by train early the next morning. I had little hesitation in asking Mir Jaffar Khan if I could bring Bhutto along with me to Rojhan Jamali for the night as it made the arrangements more convenient. As a Sindhi, Mir Jaffar Khan had known Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto and he happily extended his invitation to include the younger Bhutto.

However, the evening at Rojhan Jamali did not prove to be a complete success for all. It was not that Mir Jaffar Khan's hospitality was found wanting - he was indeed a splendid host in the Baloch tradition. It was just that Mir Jaffar Khan was effusive in his praise of my elders such as Nawab Imam Buksh Khan and his son Nawab Bahram Khan, but not a word was said about the Bhuttos. It was a minor social gaffe, particularly in view of Bhutto's sensitivities. Later Bhutto insisted on leaving Rojhan Jamali at an extremely early hour the next day without the courtesy of saying farewell to our host. So, I had to leave an apologetic message with Mir Jaffar Khan's manager.

Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto received Ambassador and Mrs. Hildrith, their niece and I at the newly constructed family mansion, 'Al Murtaza', in Larkana. The Ambassador was not only the chief representative of the most influential country, he was also the father-in-law of President Iskander Mirza's son, Humayun. We had a superb lunch catered by the Palace Hotel. Efficient waiters from Karachi dressed in crisp white uniforms and gloves served the food with white and red wines, a remarkable originality for the rural areas of Sindh. After lunch we were taken across a lengthy distance to the lands of Nawab Ghaibi Khan, the Sirdar of the Chandio tribe, who had organized a gazelle shoot for us.

The shoot soon proved to be 'over-organized'. Beaters on trained camels drove the desperate gazelles in large herds of forty or so straight towards our guns. Zulfi and I lowered our guns very soon after the commencement of the drive. We had already shot a couple of gazelles each by that time. I also stopped my retainer from shooting further. There was little sport to be had in simply massacring these splendid animals. Unfortunately the American ambassador and his wife did not share our sentiments. They took part in the slaughter of fifteen or more of these *chinkaras*. (My host and I shared his room at night. When we had retired, Bhutto confided in me that he was quite disgusted with the Americans' behavior.) After the *chinkara* shoot we were taken to a partridge shoot in the *kucha* area near the lands of Khan Bahadur Nabi Buksh Bhutto (Mumtaz Bhutto's father). Later the Americans, Zulfi and I had tea at Nabi Buksh Bhutto's house before we all departed separately for our homes.

A lot of time and trouble was expended by the hosts on such shoots. But they remain a vital link even to this day whereby the Sindhi 'feudal' can establish links with the power brokers of the day. The canny Zulfikar Bhutto, despite having spent most of his life out of Sindh, quickly grasped the importance of these shoots. More intelligent than most, his shoots were always held at the best *shikargahs*, which often meant that the actual hosts were other people and not him. But the guests were his and they remained beholden to him for the invitations. Using these means at his disposal, by 1957 he had firmly ingratiated himself to the avid *shikari* Iskander Mirza, and was off to New York as part of the UN delegation led by Feroz Khan Noon. In March 1958 Iskander Mirza sent Bhutto as a chairman of the Pakistani delegation to the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea held at Geneva.

Bhutto was a talented orator and the gift of public speaking came naturally to him. His trip to Geneva proved to be a success, and he reveled in his newly-acquired role. Shortly after his return, he visited me at home one morning and brought along with him the address he gave at the UN Conference on the Sea. Over morning coffee, he insisted in reading out the address in full for my benefit. It was related to the laws of territorial sea limits, and was not quite what I would have in mind for a piece of morning entertainment, but Bhutto was so proud of his achievement I did not have the heart to disappoint him. I listened to him as he recited the lengthy speech that meant so much to him.

Bhutto's letter written in April 1958 to Iskander Mirza reveals the level of flattery he would descend to, to achieve his own personal ambitions. From Geneva, while he had been attending the United Nations Conference on the Sea, Bhutto had written to his mentor expressing his '...imperishable and devoted loyalty'. He went into a state of extreme fawning by adding: 'When the history of our Country is written by objective Historians, your name will be placed even before that of Mr Jinnah. Sir, I say this because I mean to, and not because you are the President of my Country.'¹⁰⁶

Not surprisingly, in October 1958 Iskander Mirza made the young thirty-year-old Bhutto his minister for commerce. As I always tend to avoid people in power, I began to distance myself from him from then onwards. However, our friendly relationship continued for many years that followed. It was to last until a few months into his fateful climb to the very pinnacle of power in Pakistan. By then his ego could brook no equals. In Islamabad during his days as president, he once invited me for dinner. When we met, he addressed me as 'Mr.' Mazari, and I, in turn, addressed him formally as Mr. President. It seemed that the only use the past had for Bhutto was as a means to getting where he had got to. It appeared that now that he had got there, apart from the slights he now wished to avenge, the past had become largely irrelevant.

¹⁰⁶ White Paper on the Performance of the Bhutto Regime, Vol. 1. Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. 1979.

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My life in Sonmiani remained relatively unchanged in the 1950s. By now I had a son and a daughter from my second wife Munawar, and over time, two more sons would follow. There are some children who when born give so much pleasure to their parents that life without them seems barren and incomplete. Yet there are also children who willfully inflict grief and pain on their parents. Unfortunately it has been so with my second family.

The tribe still largely clung to its age-old ways and continued to abjure the new trappings of modernity represented by the district administration and police force. Nearly all my time was taken in settling disputes and suppressing the few incidents of crime that continued to occur sporadically. Administratively the Mazari area had been amicably divided into two sections, the affairs of Rojhan and the western portion across the Indus were dealt by my brother Sher Jan, while the Sindh portion and eastern belt came under my supervision. Our elder brother, Mir Balakh Sher, who became a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1955, would regularly visit Rojhan but preferred not to involve himself in tribal affairs. Politics was his *métier*,

In general 'tribal' affairs encompassed the general welfare of the Mazari tribe and all those who lived in the adjacent areas of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and Bahawalpur. It could range from providing wheat in times of flood, to preventing violence when serious inter-clan disputes arose. Among the responsibilities that traditionally devolved on the tribal chief, was the maintenance and preservation of the tribe's honor. This obligation can never be taken lightly among the Baloch. It so happened one day, when coincidentally both my brothers and I were present in Rojhan, that we were hastily informed of an armed raid into our area by the neighboring Bugtis. I clearly recall, it was Christmas day in 1957. After shooting and wounding a poor non-Baloch *Juth* herdsman, the raiders forcibly carried away a number of camels across the desert to the Bugti area. In Baloch culture a raid into another tribe's area is regarded as a brazen act of insult on part of the perpetrators. It called for swift retribution on our part.

Due to unavoidable circumstances the responsibility for retaliation fell on me. Mir Balakh Sher was a serving member of Parliament, and Sher Jan was an officer in the Border Military Police, the law enforcement agency for the Tribal Area. Direct involvement in any action by either of them might have led to an awkward predicament. That day I had to issue a tribal call to arms. The next day I was riding south on horseback twenty-five miles into the tribal area with a large armed and quite indignant Mazari *lashkar*. That night, as we camped out in the open near a border post called Barra at the foothills of the Suleiman Range, the elder *muqqadums* and *waderas* of the clans prevailed upon me to remain at the camp and leave the carrying out of the retaliatory raid to them. The chance of me getting wounded or killed in the foray would, they insisted, lead to an all out tribal war. Peace in such an event could then

only be contemplated once a similar fate had been inflicted upon one of the Bugti Sirdars (ironically, both of whom, Akbar and Ahmed Nawaz, were my friends as well as brothers-in-law). The next day in broad daylight the Mazari horsemen stormed into the Bugti area. They carried off a huge herd of camels, along with a fine horse which they had captured from a Bugti *wadera*. They delivered the captured herd to me at my desert camp.

The next day we rode back to Rojhan with honor avenged. Some months later a *jirga* was held at Kashmor to mediate this tribal dispute. The matter was settled between Sirdar Akbar Bugti and my brother Mir Balakh Sher who were both present on the occasion. The stolen camels were returned to both tribes and a cash settlement was given by the Bugtis to the injured *Juth*. Peace was restored between the two tribes.

It proved to be a busy week for me. Only a day or so after my return to Rojhan I heard that Kheeahzais, a tribe associated with the Bugtis, had crossed the border and occupied Mazari land to the north at Garmo on the slopes of the Suleiman Range. Garmo was at the time being prospected for oil by a US company, the *American Pak-Shell Company*. The Americans had constructed rather rough *kucha* roads to the site which enabled us to cover the thirty or so miles rapidly in motor vehicles. When I arrived there more Mazaris began joining us in groups of small armed bands as the news of the occupation spread. Soon we had an armed force of a few hundred, and had taken positions on the slopes facing the armed intruders. It was a tense situation. I was loathe to start a minor war, so I thought it best to give the occupiers a chance to withdraw. Clearly, we were not prepared to concede an inch of our historical territory. The tribal boundaries had been marked in stone for centuries past, and now due to an ironical quirk of British Raj history, constituted the dividing line between the province of Balochistan and District Dera Ghazi Khan in the Punjab.

Within a day of our arrival we were engulfed by a host of bewildered and worried officialdom. From Balochistan came the Political Agent from Sibi and a force of Baloch Levy, from Dera Ghazi Khan came the Deputy Commissioner as well as the Political Assistant for the D. G. Khan Tribal Area. Because of the American involvement in the oil exploration, it had become a very sensitive government issue. I passed New Year's eve 1957 on the dark wintry slopes of the Suleiman Range. After four days of staring each other across gun-sights, the Kheeahzais had little choice but to withdraw. Only after I received assurances that the matter had been settled and that there would be no recurrences, did we descend and return to our homes in the plains.

All during the earlier years my interest in Baloch affairs remained high. Overlooking the historical rivalries between neighboring tribes, the issue of Baloch nationalism had continued to prey on the minds of a large number of Baloch leaders. Even as a youthful sixteen-year old I had been keen for the amalgamation of district Dera Ghazi Khan into Balochistan. The idea of a greater Baloch homeland within the boundaries of Pakistan

was to remain one of my dreams for several years to come. It was in 1946 on a trip to Quetta that I had first met the Khan of Kalat who had invited Sirdar Akbar Bugti and me to lunch at his residence the Awan-e-Kalat. Now in 1957, I once more received an invitation from him. This time he had asked me to visit him at his home at Kalat.

In British India Kalat had enjoyed a senior status among other princely states. After Hyderabad and Kashmir, it encompassed the greatest area of land. It comprised Sarawan (upper Balochistan), Jhalawan (lower Balochistan), Las Bela, Makran and Kharan. Despite its lack of development or great wealth, its ruler was entitled to a nineteen gun salute. The treaties between Kalat and Britain were unique and comparable to those that the Empire had entered with Nepal. Kalat enjoyed autonomy on all subjects other than defence, foreign affairs and currency. In the beginning the Khan seemed quite amenable to the idea of a separate Muslim state. He even invited Mr. Jinnah in 1946, who spent several days in Kalat as well as Quetta. Once the Khan received a legal opinion from the constitutional expert Sir Henry Moncton (who had also advised the Nizam of Hyderabad) which suggested that the Kalat State could not automatically be integrated into Pakistan, he changed his stance. His now altered view was further strengthened when the tumandars of the Marri-Bugti and D. G. Khan tribal areas insisted that their areas were legally outside the frontiers of British India as well.

After Partition the Khan's growing demands for independence were stymied by the Central government which shrewdly prevailed upon the heads of the minor Kalat principalities of Las Bela, Makran and Kharan to accede to Pakistan. This left the Khan with little option. He reluctantly joined Pakistan to become Head of the Balochistan States Union, and was given a cosmetic title of 'Khan-i-Azam' as a conciliatory gesture. The Khan's younger brother, Agha Abdul Karim, was more militant. In 1948 he raised a flag of rebellion. After a clash with the army at Sarlat on the border of Afghanistan, the rebels were captured.¹⁰⁷

On the creation of One Unit in West Pakistan in 1955, the Khan much to his dismay, found himself relegated to the position of an ordinary citizen. Dissatisfied, he began to campaign for a division of West Pakistan into linguistically defined provinces. He now envisaged the unification of Kalat, the Balochi speaking parts of Balochistan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Jacobabad districts, into a single province. To further his plans the Khan had already delegated the task of gathering the Baloch leadership from Kalat state, Dera Ghazi Khan and upper Sindh to Akbar Khan Bugti. It was for this reason he had invited me to Kalat in 1957. As I had always felt that the Baloch tribes of Dera Ghazi Khan ought to have been amalgamated with their cousins in Balochistan, I enthusiastically endorsed the Khan's proposal - as far as I was concerned, we were ethnically, linguistically, culturally and historically one people.

¹⁰⁷ After serving seven years of a ten-year sentence, Agha Abdul Karim released in 1956; he went on to form a political party called Ustoman Gal ('People's Party' in Balochi) with Ghous Buksh Bizenjo as the General Secretary.

In October 1957 the largest ever gathering of Baloch leadership took place in Karachi. The meeting was chaired by the Khan and included the Sirdars of all the Baloch tribes in Balochistan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Sindh. On the day of the gathering, some of us were invited to tea at the Presidency by its incumbent, Iskander Mirza. In the presence of guests which included Sirdar Akbar Bugti, Sirdar Khair Buksh Marri, Ghous Buksh Raisani, Mir Jaffar Khan Jamali, my brother Mir Balakh Sher and myself, President Mirza began to chide the Khan. 'Why are you trying to mislead these Sirdars...', were the words he used to begin. Then scathingly, he continued, 'These days you are opposing the One Unit and talking about a new linguistic province, but when that same One Unit was created you were making long gushy speeches in its favor. What you really hanker for, is a re-creation of your old Kalat State. All the rest is merely eye-wash. You now just want to fool these people into supporting you.' The Khan looked embarrassed and remained silent. We finished our tea and left quietly. At the conference the enthusiasm ebbed. Later when some of the leaders belonging to the old Kalat State demanded the break-up of the One Unit scheme and the restoration of Kalat, the majority of the other Sirdars left the gathering in protest.

When martial law was declared on 8 October 1958, one of the reasons given by Iskander Mirza was the purported state of secession by Kalat. It was alleged that the Khan had approached the Shah of Iran to admit Kalat into his country as an autonomous region. Some days earlier the Khan had raised the old State flag on his Mid Fort at Kalat. This action was deemed to be an act of secession, and his supposed communication with the Shah was considered to be further proof of his 'treasonous' intentions. What was conveniently overlooked was that the special privileges accorded to the former rulers of Kalat, Khairpur and Bahawalpur at Independence - and later confirmed upon the creation of the One Unit scheme - allowed them for the duration of their lifetime, to retain their titles, their privy purses, dispensations from arms and vehicle licenses and the right to fly their personal flags. In 1957 I had myself seen the Khan's personal flag fluttering over his palace.

Using his 'treasonable' act as a pretext, on 5 October 1957, an army detachment surrounded Kalat. In the clash that ensued, a number of Kalatis were killed and, to the anger of the local populace, a minaret of a mosque collapsed after taking a direct mortar hit. The Khan, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, was arrested and taken forcibly to Lahore. This act of aggression caused a wave of anger to sweep throughout Balochistan. It only further compounded existing ill-will which had been caused by an incident that had occurred the previous year by an act of administrative insensitivity. In 1957 a Baloch woman accused of adultery had been murdered by members of her husband's family. Ignoring the precedents of the local jirga law, the authorities had insisted on sending the dead woman's clothing for forensic tests to Lahore. A post-mortem was also carried out much against the wishes of her family. This affair had incensed the tribal

community in every part of Kalat. It was generally viewed among the locals to be a calculated insult and a degradation of Baloch honor and traditions.

The arrest of the Khan culminated in an armed insurrection on part of a section of the Zehri tribe under the leadership of the fiery eighty-year old Nauroze Khan, who had previously participated in a series of armed revolts against the British in the 1920s and 1930s. Nauroze Khan demanded the release of the Khan and a commitment from the government to respect tribal customs. The insurgents took to the hills around Moola Pass, and fought a series of actions against the army. In early April 1959 they ambushed and wiped out a platoon of the Frontier Corps' Pishin Scouts at Chuttock near the Iran border. A little while later they attacked and destroyed a part of a military convoy of trucks in a pass thirty miles south of Quetta, as a result of which traffic on the Quetta road was suspended during the night-time. Foreign Press also reported that the guerillas had managed to shoot down three slow-moving *Fury* aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force which had been used in aerial bombing raids on their mountainous hideouts.

The rebellion lasted for a year and a half and ended only when Nauroze Khan's nephew, Sirdar Doda Khan Zehri carrying a Koran assured him that the authorities had accepted all their conditions. Baloch traditions would henceforth be respected, the rights of the insurgents would be restored and their grievances met with. The Koran was supposedly sent by Brigadier (later General) Riaz Hussain, the army commander engaged against them, as proof of his honest intentions - an incident which General Riaz Hussain denied to me in person during a conversation some years later.¹⁰⁸ When the rebels came down from their sanctuary in the hills, their leadership was surrounded and taken into custody. For the first time mention was made in the heavily censored local Press, which referred to these guerrilla leaders as an '11 member gang of dacoits'. Later they were tried by a Special Military Court at Hyderabad. All of them were sentenced to death; only the octogenarian Nauroze Khan was spared from the scaffold because of his age. After the men had been hanged, the authorities sadistically requested the aged warrior to identify the bodies. The modern legend that has evolved around this episode is worth mentioning: 'Is this one your son?' an army officer cold-heartedly asked Nauroze Khan as he pointed to the body of the elderly warrior's son. Nauroze Khan stared at the soldier for a moment then replied quietly, 'All these brave young men are my sons.' Then looking at the faces of his dead supporters, he noticed that the moustache of one of them had drooped in death. He went over to the body and tenderly curled the moustache upwards while gently admonishing, 'Even in death, my son, one should not allow the enemy to think, even for one moment, that you have despaired.' The armed rebellion and its willfully callous conclusion inflamed the emotions of a large number of Baloch, As frustrations gathered and wounds festered, it eventually fuelled the revolt that later blazed through Balochistan in the 1970s. Nauroze Khan and his men were lauded in poems of the Baloch laureate, Gul Khan Naseer. His

¹⁰⁸ General Riaz Hussain later became the first governor of Balochistan.

works, which railed against the injustices heaped upon people of Balochistan, were read by the young aspiring nationalists of the Baloch Student Organization and urged them on to take a defiant stand in the 'struggle' that was meant to lie ahead.

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The day Martial Law was declared I was at Karachi. Like most other people I had been watching the increasing political turmoil with deep dismay. So, when my friend Akbar Bugti telephoned he found me in a depressed state of mind. He had recently begun spending more time at Karachi as a result of his appointment some months earlier as minister of state for defence. To cheer me up, Akbar suggested we meet for dinner. Rather than venture out, I proposed that he join me at my house. We talked late into the evening about the events that had been taking place. The death of the deputy speaker in East Pakistan was still fresh in our minds, as was the nation-wide civil disobedience movement threatened by the Muslim League. The day before the police at Karachi had used tear gas to disperse a large crowd of Muslim League supporters.

Later that night at about 11.30 p.m. he called me on the telephone. He had just returned to his rooms at the Palace Hotel. I remember his words, 'There is something odd going on,' he said, 'there are army trucks all over the place'.

I jokingly replied, 'You're the Minister of Defence. Don't tell me you don't know what your people are up to'.

Just then a third voice piped on the phone, '*Urdu mein bolo, ya angrezi mein. Aur zaban hummain summaj nahin aati* [Speak either in Urdu or English. I don't understand other languages]'.

As was our wont, we had been speaking Balochi. Angered by this insolent intrusion, Akbar bellowed at the interloper and informed him of his ministerial rank. The man coolly retorted, 'Don't you know, Martial Law has been declared!' Within the hour Akbar's telephone line had been disconnected. Soon more was to follow. Within a year the Bugti Chief found himself in jail with the threat of death lingering over his head.

The events that led up to this extraordinary situation were quite simple. With the dismissal of the government by the coup, Akbar Bugti's ministerial days came to an abrupt end. Some months later he was back in Karachi on a visit. When he was returning to Quetta by road he was stopped at a military check post near the city and charged with smuggling. All that he had bought in Karachi was confiscated. He was forced to undergo this humiliation at the hands of young officers who only a few months earlier would have treated him with the utmost deference as a minister for defence. What worsened the outrage in Akbar's eyes was that it had taken place in his home province where he was a paramount tribal chief of a major tribe. After the event

he became convinced that someone had instigated the action against him. That someone, Akbar felt, could only be one who was aware of his movements. His suspicions eventually fell upon one of his relations, Haji Haibat Khan Bugti, who was also his brother Ahmed Nawaz's father-in-law. Haji Haibat Bugti had long been mistrusted by Akbar and when he received further evidence from a third source of Haji Haibat Khan's activities as a 'government informer', Akbar became convinced that he had found his antagonist.

Some weeks later, on 11 September 1959, Haibat Bugti was missing. After a search for the missing man proved fruitless, investigation was taken over by the local martial law authorities and suspicion soon became centered on the Bugti chief. Akbar Bugti was taken into military custody, along with his alleged accomplice, Arshoo Bugti. After being tortured, Arshoo led the investigators to a *karaiz* from where Haji Haibat Bugti's body was finally recovered. The Bugti chief and Arshoo Bugti were charged with murder and tried by a Special Military Court. I attended the proceeding where I learnt that a certain Major Sher Ali Baz had been using third degree methods in an attempt to extract a confession from my friend. Akbar refused to succumb to the ill-treatment. He insisted at the trial that as Arshoo's confession was extracted by use of severe torture, it held little lawful value. The military court did not accept this view, and in late December 1958 sentenced the Bugti chief to death. Arshoo got life imprisonment. The Martial Law authorities clearly wished to make an example of Akbar Khan Bugti. If the spirit of justice had prevailed, the Bugti chief should have been tried in an ordinary civilian court of law, or else, the traditional *jirga* law of Balochistan ought to have prevailed. In fact a *jirga* had taken place under which Akbar had agreed to make a settlement. According to tribal norms, an informer is deemed to be a base and ignoble person and deserving of punishment. Killing one can often be adjudged to be an affair of honor. Whatever failings there may be in the centuries-old tribal law, it must be remembered that even a paramount chief was wholly subject to it and had to answer to it for his transgressions.

* * *

It was during the 1950s that I first took an active part in politics at the district level. In Dera Ghazi Khan there were, by recent tradition, two opposing political camps. The death of Nawab Sir Bahrain Khan in 1923, soon followed by the deaths of two successive Mazari Tumandars, namely my uncle and my father, had left a political vacuum in the district. This vacuum was largely filled by the Leghari Tumandar, Nawab Jamal Khan Leghari, much to the dismay of the Mazaris. When my brother Mir Balakh Sher attained majority, he laid claim to the family political legacy. Soon after the politics of the district split into distinct Mazari and Leghari groupings. Balakh Sher at the age of twenty-one defeated Sirdar Mohammad Khan Leghari in March 1949 for the chairmanship of the District Board. In the 1955 elections in Dera Ghazi Khan for the West Pakistan Assembly, Sirdar Mohammad Khan, his father Sirdar Jamal Khan, and

their group were defeated. The continuing Mazari-Leghari tussle in Dera Ghazi, which has now lasted for over seven decades, illustrates all that is wrong with our rural politics. There never has been any divergence of political philosophy between the two rival camps - it is just simple battle for local power between two contending political personalities, offering little benefit to the community at large. There is almost a childlike obsession with having your own deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in office. These government officials may be as corrupt and venal as they may wish to be, but as long as they blindly follow the instructions issued by the ruling district politician of the moment, then all is well as far as most of our rural politicians are concerned. Therefore they dare not oppose the particular government of the day. This maxim applies to most feudal politicians in the country. Recently, rural politicians have seen severe criticism for their near habitual tendency to join the party in power. Unfortunately, this is not a new phenomenon.

In 1956 I was elected to the District Board (as it was then called) of Dera Ghazi Khan along with a number of my family members. I soon realized that in the eyes of my political colleagues I suffered from an inherent drawback, as by my nature I was inclined towards issues rather than personalities.

CHAPTER 3

The Ayub Khan Regime

I bought my first house in Karachi in 1957 in the new suburb of Bahadurabad. At first it seemed to be at quite a distance from the city. When my family and I moved into our new home, many of our neighbors were diplomats from the American and other embassies. In those days much of the city's social life revolved around the diplomatic circle. Formal dinners were very much in vogue. Five course sit down meals with place cards, candles and a full selection of wines and liqueurs were a must. In hindsight, it does seem a bit unusual, but as a twenty-seven-year old I found myself playing host to ambassadors, high commissioners, and a large number of members of the diplomatic corps. Many of them became close personal friends and have kept their links over the decades that followed. Among them were the US ambassador William Rowntree, British ambassador, Alexander Simon, Indian high commissioner Rajeshwar Dayal, Mercer and Mabel Walter, and Bob and Penny Clifford. One may well wonder what these gentlemen made of a young man in his late twenties playing host to them, but those were different days. Among the Americans in particular there was a certain fascination for Pakistan, and they seemed genuinely interested in meeting and getting to know its people and learning about its diverse cultures. It was also an age of innocence for our relatively new nation, and we carried our green passport with great pride during our trips abroad. My time continued to be divided between Sonmiani and Karachi. While at Sonmiani I was kept busy; in Karachi I was relatively a gentleman of leisure. I would devote my spare time to reading, the odd afternoon show at the cinema, and in the evenings I would invariably be out to dinner or some other social engagement. Despite the feeling of general contentment with life, there were two issues which continued to gnaw at my conscience: one was the Balochistan issue, and the other was a growing abhorrence of the one-man dictatorship that Pakistan had now succumbed to.

* * *

Upon assumption of power as the chief martial law administrator and president of the country, Ayub Khan wielded supreme power. His authority rested on the support of the army. To administer the country, he relied solely on the bureaucracy. Politicians had no role to play as far as he was concerned. In fact, lumping them with smugglers and black marketeers, he issued an open warning to them in his first radio address on

declaration of Martial Law in October 1958. He threateningly told them to 'behave, otherwise, retribution will be swift and sure'.¹⁰⁹

While Ayub Khan decided to lay all ills on the heads of the bickering politicians, he chose to overlook the fact that all major decisions taken by Ghulam Muhammad and Iskander Mirza had enjoyed his tacit approval. He had remained close to the centre of power ever since his elevation to the position of commander-in-chief of the army in 1951. The fact that he had already stayed on as army chief for seven long years was a reflection of the prominent role he had played during the 1950s - the decade of intrigues. Even some of his senior generals were of the opinion that their commander-in-chief, despite having attained the highest possible post in the army, harbored limitless ambitions and was 'all out for himself in most matters'.¹¹⁰ During this period neighboring India had a single prime minister and several army chiefs. In Pakistan we had seen seven prime ministers, but only one General Ayub Khan. In reality the bureaucracy had been ruling the country, at first surreptitiously and then, after the 1953 dismissal of Nazimuddin, openly. The bureaucratic rule had been closely abetted by the army. Ayub Khan gave his open approval of Nazimuddin's sacking by joining Ghulam Muhammad's appointed government as defence minister (in the so-called 'Cabinet of Talent'). By the end of the politically tumultuous decade, the military chief had clearly gained the upper hand at the expense of his bureaucratic team mates.

The chaos that had permeated the politics in the 1950s cannot simply be blamed on the politicians alone. Their political groups, with the odd exception, were not formed on the basis of any economic or social programme. They were formed to win elections or topple existing ministries, and soon disintegrated once they had achieved their short-term objective. As early as 1951 these political groupings had fallen prey to the bureaucracy's divisive machinations. As governor-general, Ghulam Muhammad - assisted by senior officials such as Iskander Mirza and Ayub Khan - had largely destroyed the foundations of democracy. The political turmoil that resulted was conveniently blamed on the politicians who were easy targets for the public, not as yet familiar with back-room conspiracies, to vent their wrath at. The politicians did not help their image as they behaved in an atrociously selfish and largely undemocratic manner. Who could defend the unsavory deed? of the likes of Qayum Khan and Ayub Khuro for instance?¹¹¹ Khuro was one of many who had gravitated to politics for the sheer desire for power. For politicians like him, power had to be attained at any cost. And yet by the

¹⁰⁹ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military & Politics in Pakistan*, op. cit, p. 2 (Appendix C); from General Ayub Khan's first radio broadcast to the nation on 8 October 1958.

¹¹⁰ Lt.-General M. Attiqur Rahman, *Back to the Pavilion*, Ardeshir Cowasjee (privately published) Karachi, 1989, p. 125; the then chief of general staff, General Slier Ali Pataudi's comments to General Attiqur Rahman.

¹¹¹ By the mid-1950s the term 'Khuro-ism' had come to mean that 'members of the Legislative Assembly shall be arrested; their relatives will be put under detention; officers will be transferred who will not carry out the behests against inconvenient persons; elections shall be interfered with and members of legislatures shall be terrorized': Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, vol. 1, September 1955, p. 656; cited in Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan*, Praeger, 1980, p. 43.

late 1950s there were signs of a growing realization among a handful of politicians, such as Suhrawardy, that an alliance between groupings belonging to the two wings was necessary to bring a degree of stability to the system. But it was too late by then. Who should one blame for the collapse of Pakistan's first attempt at a democratic system? In reality all three of the ruling groups were at fault:

1. senior bureaucrats - led by Ghulam Muhammad, and later by Iskander Mirza-willfully schemed to circumvent the Constitution and prevented elected leaders from managing the country's affairs. They willy-nilly created and destroyed governments by giving and later withdrawing patronage from beleaguered prime ministers;
2. a number of unprincipled politicians, showing scant respect for the democratic nature of the system, followed the dictates of the bureaucrats solely for the sake of achieving power; and,
3. the army as represented by its chief Ayub Khan, who willfully aided and abetted the bureaucrats in their stratagems, thereby prevented the basics of democracy from taking root.

Having taken power by force, Ayub Khan began his rule by disassociating himself from his own role in the previous seven years of political chicanery. He now insisted that his aim of making Pakistan 'a sound, solid and cohesive nation' could 'be achieved only if as a start a Constitution is evolved that will suit the genius of the people and be based on the circumstances confronting them'.¹¹² He openly blamed the parliamentary system for having failed to provide political stability and national unity that was necessary for the country's well-being. Holding the politicians in contempt, he publicly concluded that 'the general belief is that none of these men have any honesty of purpose, integrity or patriotism'.¹¹³ To gain approval of the public he now presented himself as a man who would finally bring justice in the corrupt society that had been forced upon the hapless citizens. When Ayub Khan announced that the country was riddled with 'disruptionists, political opportunists, smugglers, black marketeers, and other such social vermin, sharks and leeches',¹¹⁴ the country applauded.

Shortly after the *coup d'état* two martial law regulations were introduced: one made the adulteration of foodstuffs a criminal offence, and the other made black marketing subject to heavy punishment. Within a month of imposition of martial law, Customs had seized Rs. 30 million of smuggled goods and gold bullion, in comparison with the previous eleven years total seizures of Rs. 30 million.¹¹⁵ The regulations also fixed prices

¹¹² Muhammad Ayub Khan, *Friends not Masters*, Oxford University Press Karachi, 1967, p. 186.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹¹⁴ Ayub Khan, *Speeches and Statements*, Pakistan Publications, Karachi Vol. I, 4.

¹¹⁵ Khalid Bin Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 94.

for a number of basic commodities. There was a sudden and substantial drop in prices in the market-place. These were popular measures. There was, an initial wave of enthusiasm among the public. The people had become fed up with the previous state of political affairs and welcomed the new change. The army as a national institution still inspired a great deal of respect, and Ayub Khan got the benefit of the public's mood, but it was not to last indefinitely.

One of the first acts of the new regime was to deal with politicians. Political parties had been banned on the proclamation of Martial Law. The ban was accompanied with the freezing of bank accounts and the detention of some of the politicians. Ayub Khuro was dramatically arrested on a charge of selling a car on the black market. Charges of corruption and misconduct were brought against former prime ministers, such as Suhrawardy and Feroz Khan Noon, and several Cabinet ministers. These headline catching actions created the impression that the military regime was all set to clean out the body politic of the country for good. The promulgation of the Elective Bodies (Disqualification) Order - or EBDO - defined the term misconduct very widely and disqualified, or 'Ebdoed' as it popularly came to be known, an estimated 5000 persons from participating in politics. People who had been previously politically persecuted, such as Abdul Ghaffar Khan who had been arrested earlier under the Security of Pakistan Act 1952, found themselves unfairly disqualified as well under the wide ranging ambit of Ayub Khan's EBDO.

The military government brought about the long overdue land reforms in 1959. Some 2.5 million acres were surrendered by 902 landowners¹¹⁶ in West Pakistan (out of which the Mazari chief's family surrendered the largest amount of land - 349,600 acres in Dera Ghazi Khan District alone, which represented fourteen percent of the total land surrendered in West Pakistan).¹¹⁷ The Mazari property in Sindh was surrendered separately. The second largest surrender was 89,500 acres, made by another Dera Ghazi Khan family, the Legharis. The land reforms carried out in the Punjab (with the exception of certain parts of Bahawalpur division) were fairly thorough. The larger landholders in Sindh-perhaps because of their powerful *shikar* connections and helped by local revenue department and corruption, which was then more prevalent in Sindh - managed to obtain more lenient treatment. Despite the stated intention of the Martial Law authorities that the land reforms were intended to bring about a just and equitable redistribution of land among the poor landless tenants, the first signs of self-aggrandizement had begun. A large part of the resumed land was soon handed over to military and civil officials at throw-away prices. The halcyon days for the new military-bureaucratic elite had arrived. Soon urban land was being parceled out to these officials as well. Since there was nothing to prevent these officials from reselling the property at high prices in the open market, a new class of wealth was being rapidly formed. It was

¹¹⁶ *The Economic Survey of Pakistan*, 1963, p. 33.

¹¹⁷ *Pakistan Times*, 24 July 1959.

a subtle form of officially sanctioned corruption - but corruption it nevertheless was. In time this military regime largesse would lead to unforeseen ethnic tensions in Sindh, where the beneficiaries of the hundreds and thousands of newly irrigated land were largely non-resident Punjabis, military-bureaucratic officials, and not members of the local Sindhi peasantry.¹¹⁸

At the very outset, Ayub Khan's regime made the development of the economy of the country a priority. It was an idea that hardly anyone with the nation's well-being at heart could disagree with. But the way it was earned out was, questionable. Ayub Khan himself proclaimed his motto to be: 'I may be right, I may be wrong, but I have no doubts.'¹¹⁹ The basis of his economic policy was to provide 'all possible incentives for stimulation of private sector and to create those facilities which the private sector has neither the ability nor the willingness to develop'.¹²⁰ This led to, among other things, the notorious export bonus voucher scheme which allowed businessmen to multiply their profits virtually overnight. As a direct result of the General's skewed economic policies, wealth soon became concentrated in the hands of some two dozen families.¹²¹ This policy also laid the foundations of corrupt business ethics in the country. As wealth now could be made with the procured connivance and assistance of the bureaucracy, there was little need for entrepreneurial skills or business abilities. Honesty and business integrity were rapidly becoming a thing of the past for those who wished to make immense profits.

By May 1959 Ayub Khan had formulated the political system which in his view would 'suit the genius of the people'. He announced the Basic Democracies scheme. It provided for the election of 80,000 Basic Democrats equally divided between West and East Pakistan. The BD members, as they were soon commonly called, were to be elected by direct adult franchise. They were part of a four-tiered structure of local government. At the lowest level the BD members were to form two-thirds of the membership of rural union councils or urban town and union committees, with the remaining one-third of these organizations being nominated non-official members appointed by the government. These councils/committees were led by an elected chairman from within their ranks. The tier above was the *thana* or *tehsil* council which was chaired by the local

¹¹⁸ By 1971, land distribution at Guddu Barrage was as follows:

Local Peasants	185,606 acres
Defence forces/retired govt. officials	103,237 acres
Displaced Punjabis from Mangla/Islamabad	37,580 acres
Frontier tribesmen	1656 acres
TOTAL: Sindhis 185,606 acres non-Sindhis:	142,463 acres

(Above information was obtained from: Sind Annual 1971, Government of Sindh, December 1971).

¹¹⁹ Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹²⁰ Ayub Khan, Pakistan's Economic Progress, *International Affairs*, Vol. 43, January 1967.

¹²¹ According to *The Second Five Year Plan, 1960-65* (Government of Pakistan, 1960, p. 71.) by '31 March, 1959, 63 percent of the total bank credit went to only 222 accounts in the form of advances of Rs. 1 million and above; advances to borrowers of small means did not exceed 6 percent of the total credit spread over 37,725 accounts'.

tehsildar. Half its members were chairmen from the local union councils/town and union committees, and the other half *thana/tehsil* level government officers. The third tier was the district council chaired by the all-powerful deputy commissioner. Half its membership came from district level government officers of development departments and half consisted of unofficial members. Only half of the unofficial members - or quarter of the total membership - were represented by chairmen of the district union councils/town and union committees (i.e., elected BD members). At the highest level was the divisional council chaired by the divisional commissioner. Its membership requirement was the same as that of the district council apart from the fact the government officers included all the deputy commissioners in the division.

Having compartmentalized Pakistan into small constituencies, the new system ensured that the elected BD members from the rural areas remained within the coercive control of the *tehsildars* and deputy commissioners. The rural union councils could be managed and manipulated by patronage or use of intimidation exercised by local officialdom. It was by these means that Ayub Khan planned to out-flank potential urban hostility. His new source of power was intended to come from the envisaged passivity of the rural areas. On 26 December 1959 the first election of the Basic Democrats took place. And two and a half months later, on 14 February 1960, despite the absence of a proper Constitution, they managed to 'elect' General Ayub Khan as President.

The first martial law Cabinet of October 1958 had ten ministers, including three generals. Among the seven civilian ministers was the host of many of Ayub Khan's *shikars* - the thirty-year-old Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto had easily overcome the stigma of his close relationship with his erstwhile mentor Iskander Mirza, and had risen high in Ayub Khan's affections; eventually attaining, for a while, a role akin to that of an adopted son to the older man. Another key figure in Ayub Khan's regime joined in April 1960 as the governor of West Pakistan. He was Malik Amir Muhammad Khan from Kalabagh. After the Niazi Khans of Isa Khel, the Maliks of the Awans of Kalabagh were the most prominent family to hail from Mianwali district. The Awans had come to possess the Mianwali Salt Range for a number of centuries and, with time, had extended their influence over their area.

Malik Amir Muhammad Khan of Kalabagh had an autocratic disposition. One critic described him as being 'by nature and upbringing an overbearing man, highly conscious of his ascriptive privileges, and although by no means uneducated or ignorant, he was conservative, obscurantist and unprogressive'.¹²² Like Bhutto, Malik Amir Muhammad Khan had come to Ayub Khan's attention because of the lavish hospitality and the quality of game he had provided to the General during his regular shoots at Kalabagh over the years. During his term as governor of West Pakistan, he was known to be ruthlessly firm with government opponents, but in matters of money,

¹²² Herbert Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis, Pakistan 1962-1969*, Oxford 1972, p. 56.

totally incorruptible. It has been said that no member of his family was ever allowed to stay at the Governor's House at Lahore during his tenure. I was to meet him on several occasions. Once it was at his express request, after I had commenced actively working for Miss Fatima Jinnah. At that meeting Kalabagh remonstrated with me in a manner similar to that of a family elder dealing with a wayward nephew. Despite my youthful years, he was a model of courtesy throughout. I did not agree with his advice to 'mend [my] ways for [my] own good'. At subsequent meetings he struck a stern and rather hostile demeanor towards me, but risking his wrath, I stubbornly stuck to my views. During his six years as governor, Kalabagh acquired a reputation of extreme repression. He was known to crush anyone who opposed or had offended him. However, it must be remembered that whatever was done in West Pakistan during Kalabagh's time, was often done at the behest of and with the blessings of Ayub Khan.

* * *

The imposition of One Unit and the brutal hangings of the Baloch rebels led by Nauroze Khan Zehri, had left simmering discontent in Balochistan. This feeling was soon openly reflected by the defiance of Ayub Khan's government by Balochistan's two representatives in the National Assembly: Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Mam, both Sirdars of major tribes. The third leading Baloch Sirdar, my friend Akbar Bugti, continued to languish in prison under the sentence of death. Moved by my friend's plight, I approached Zulfikar Bhutto to intervene in the matter with Ayub Khan. Bhutto assured me that he would do his utmost to help commute the death sentence, and rang me on several occasions to reassure me of this. He kept to his word and eventually played the vital role in getting Ayub Khan to agree to lessen the sentence to life imprisonment. Later, despite opposition from Malik Amir Muhammad Khan of Kalabagh, Governor of West Pakistan, Bhutto even managed to convince Ayub Khan to suspend the sentence. On 14 July 1961 Akbar Bugti was out of Hyderabad Jail and once more a free man but 'officially' he was no longer the head of the Bugti tribe. A week prior to his release, an order had been issued by Kalabagh's provincial government which deposed Akbar from the Tumandari of the Bugtis, replacing him with his teenage son, Salim. Until Salim attained majority, the Bugti area was to be managed by an administrative council headed by the Political Agent of Sibi.

Akbar Bugti's year and a half in prison had helped in shaping his political thinking. The 'Frontier Gandhi', Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, had also been incarcerated at Hyderabad Jail at that time. On his release, Akbar emerged a man with distinctly changed perceptions. He now spoke of oppression and the forced deprivation of rights of the people of Balochistan - no doubt he had also been angered by the government's act of deposing him as Tumandar. Very soon he began openly deriding the government in the harshest of terms - temperate language never came easily to him. Ayub Khan became outraged by Akbar's apparent lack of gratitude. In July 1962, the President, while addressing a public meeting at Quetta, attacked 'this man' as he called him, and publicly warned that

'I have still got the powers to review the sentence that was awarded to him'. Akbar Bugti ignored the warning. A few weeks later on the morning of 22 August, he was once more placed under arrest. Akbar was picked up by the police from his room at Palace Hotel at Karachi. It was announced officially that he had only been released the previous year on his assurances of good behaviour, and as he had now 'resumed his objectionable activities', orders had been issued for his arrest. Akbar Bugti had been originally arrested for the charge of murder, this time his arrest was linked clearly to his political stance. It was clear that President Muhammad Ayub could not brook any criticism.

Akbar Bugti's arrest only served to further incense other Baloch leaders. Attaullah Mengal's public condemnation of Ayub's government became harsher still. Hours after Bugti's arrest, in the afternoon on the same day, Mengal delivered a blistering attack on the government at Kakri Grounds in the Lyari area of Karachi. Mengal was arrested a week later for making his 'Kakri Grounds' speech on a charge of sedition. Not bothered by propriety, the government contemptuously failed to inform the newly constituted National Assembly that one of its members had been detained. This action caused dismay among the Opposition of the largely impotent two-month-old Parliament, but there was very little they could do. Mengal was also deposed as Sirdar of his tribe by the government. He was replaced by an aged relative, Karam Khan Mengal. After three months detention, Attaullah Mengal was released on bail in late November 1962, but he did not remain free for long. In April 1963 the newly appointed 'Sirdar' of the Mengals was assassinated. Within a week of the murder, Attaullah Mengal and his elderly father were arrested for the murder of Karam Khan Mengal.

During this period a number of other Baloch politicians had been similarly arrested, and among them was Ghous Buksh Bizenjo who was picked up at Karachi Airport on his return from a visit to Dhaka in September 1962. Gul Khan Naseer, the Baloch poet, was also detained. In July 1963 Khair Buksh Marri was arrested and charged with inciting people 'to commit acts of violence and rioting'. He was also deposed as Sirdar of the Marri, but this time it was thought wise not to appoint a replacement 'Sirdar'. Once more the Political Agent of Sibi district was given charge of an administrative council. He was assisted in his management of Marri tribal affairs by an uncle of Khair Buksh Marri's, Doda Khan, who was appointed vice chairman of the council. Doda Marri was to last three years in his office. In June 1966 he was shot dead by Marri tribesmen. Coincidentally, the same year a near relation of Akbar Bugti's, Ghulam Haider Khan, who had been assisting the government authorities in Dera Bugti, was shot dead by Bugti tribesmen led by Khan Muhammad Kalpur.¹²³

¹²³ Ironically, it was the very same Khan Muhammad Kalpur - once an ardent loyalist of his Sirdar - who was held responsible for the killing of Sirdar Akbar Bugti's youngest son Sallal, in 1992, some twenty-six years later.

With the arrest of all the notable Balochistan politicians, the affairs of the former province were in turmoil. The government's writ was largely tenuous. Ayub and his governor, Kalabagh, would make frequent visits to the area and make much publicized tours and address gatherings of 'tribal leaders' which were reported in the front pages of Pakistan's controlled Press to dissuade the public from thinking that anything may be amiss. In reality the province was ruled by naked coercion.

As a Baloch I was greatly dismayed at the manner in which my Baloch friends were being treated. The Bugtis and Marris were adjacent tribes to the Mazaris. We shared a common race, culture, language and history. Our bonds had been further cemented by marriages and personal friendships. I became an ardent supporter of the cause of Balochistan and regularly visited the jailed politicians. I would try to make, in a small way, my friend Akbar Bugti's life in prison easier by taking him reading material, cigarettes, ice-cream, soft drinks and such trifles. I had met Attaullah Mengal in 1957 when the Khan of Kalat had introduced him to me at a lunch at the Jam of Las Bela's house. Now I got to know him better. I met Ghous Buksh Bizenjo for the first time. Even then there was a marked difference between the two men. Bizenjo, who had no tribal following, was a shrewd political operator who not only spoke with a gifted tongue, but was always prepared to find a middle way out of a possible confrontation. He was once described by a close colleague as being a man who 'can't live without politics...he has to have it all the time or he will perish'.¹²⁴ On the other hand, Mengal was first and foremost a Sirdar. He was blunt and outspoken and seemed to have scant regard for the consequences.

* * *

In March 1962 General Ayub Khan announced a proposed new Constitution for the country. It was said to have been largely drafted by one of his ministers, Manzur Qadir. Earlier, in 1960, the General had appointed a Constitution Committee under supervision of Justice Shahabuddin. The Commission's recommendations on the future Constitution were completely at variance with Ayub Khan's ideas. Rather than give in to pressure from the General to change his views, Chief Justice Shahabuddin took the only honorable course open to him by resigning from the Commission.¹²⁵

Under Ayub Khan's new Constitution, a National Assembly of 156 members was to be created by the holding of non-party elections and the voting restricted to the 80,000 BD members. But neither the president nor his chosen ministers were made responsible to the new Assembly. The Assembly's powers were to be very limited, especially in relation to financial matters. Over national expenditure the Assembly was to have no

¹²⁴ Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow, Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 1981, p. 52.

¹²⁵ The former Chief Justice Shahabuddin confided his views to me in person some years later when we met in Lahore.

control whatsoever, except with respect to what was referred to as 'new expenditure', which represented a very minor aspect of financial matters. The Assembly was to be given no powers to refuse in voting the money supplies; all they could do was impotently criticize it if they wished to. In reality, under the proposed Constitution, President Ayub Khan's responsibilities to the Assembly and the BD members was minimal, and his executive power was almost unlimited. The President's veto could not be overridden even by two-thirds majority, for he could refer the bill in question to a referendum to his chosen electorate, the 80,000 BD members of Pakistan. It was nothing more than a new version of the imperial system which had imperiously ruled British India for nearly two hundred years. Like the days of British rule, opposition could now once more be controlled with the help of the army and administrative power. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, described the new Constitution accurately when he stated that it was a government of the President, by the President, and for the President.¹²⁶

The proposed Constitution did not meet unanimous approval despite the sycophantic utterings of many which were regularly reported in our local Press. In his radio broadcast to the nation on 1 March 1962, Ayub Khan announcing the Constitution said 'I believe in every word ... and have complete faith in it'. Yet during the next five and a half years the very same Constitution '... was the object of so much change and amendment by Ayub Khan and his Government that, at times, it appeared as if they were floundering in a quagmire of irresolute views, conflicting opinions, and apprehensions for the future'.¹²⁷ It was amended on no less than eight separate occasions, and as such, it is singularly difficult to credit the soundness of its intellectual foundations. In reality it was an artificial framework designed simply to produce a political system in close harmony with Ayub Khan's authoritarian nature.

The 1962 non-party elections resulted in the emergence of factions led by certain leaders or formed on a basis of provincial loyalties. There was also the usual host of landowning independents'. At the first session of the new Assembly held in June 1962, the new Constitution was duly ratified. Within a month Ayub Khan assented to a bill permitting the formation of political parties.¹²⁸ By September of that year the Muslim League (Convention) had been organized as the official government party. Earlier in August it had been announced by some veteran Muslim League members that a council of the party would meet on 29 September. To pre-empt them, arrangements were made for a meeting of the Muslim League convention at Karachi on 4 September. On the

¹²⁶ Finding themselves a few votes short of a majority, the Government obtained the crucial support of the necessary number of members of the National Assembly by dispensing favors. Among these was by a grant of a public transport route permit and Rs. 20,000 for *madrassahs* to an NWFP religious leader and; by awarding a textile mill license to an MNA from Jhang.

¹²⁷ Herbert Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis*, op. cit., p. vi.

¹²⁸ Political Parties Act, 1962; This new law was enacted as a result of mounting Opposition pressure in the Assembly which could only be checked by the creation of a government party. Ayub Khan was compelled to reconsider his earlier anti-political party convictions for the sake of sheer expediency and so, one of the key features of the new Constitution was fundamentally altered within weeks of its promulgation.

appointed day, Ayub Khan's loyalists met at a rowdy and vociferous convention, and managed to appoint Choudhry Khaliquzzaman as the Chief Organizer of their party, which became known as Muslim League (Convention). In reaction, other Muslim Leaguers later held their council meeting, which led to the formation of the opposition Muslim League (Council).

Muslim League (Convention) was created for the purpose of becoming Ayub Khan's party. It comprised ministers, Assembly members, and other followers of the government, including any number of sycophants wishing to acknowledge their loyalty to the general. The Conventionists had 78 members and held the majority in the Assembly. In November the Opposition elected Ayub Khan's brother, Sardar Bahadur Khan, as its leader. His deputies were Masihur Rahman from the eastern wing, and Khair Buksh Marri from the west. Interestingly, of the 60 members in the Opposition, 55 were from East Pakistan (comprising over 70 percent of the representatives of the eastern wing). This clearly revealed the existing realities of the day - that sycophancy was a trait less common among the Bengalis than with the so-called 'martial races' of West Pakistan.

After appointing himself President in 1958, Ayub Khan had chosen General Musa as his successor as commander-in-chief of the army. His choice was largely motivated by Ayub Khan's conviction that Musa posed no threat to him. Musa had risen from the ranks as a soldier and possessed a remarkably unambitious and submissive nature. Keeping his grip on the Army and buttressing his position with the help of senior bureaucracy, in 1962 Ayub Khan ventured further to gain the support of the very people whom he had sworn would be the nemesis of Pakistan - the politicians. As the history of Pakistan constantly reveals, a government in power never has any difficulty in enlisting the support of the ever existing host of compliant politicians. Having officially retired from the Army, Ayub Khan, now a civilian president - with the backing of the powerful Army and a dependable bureaucracy - had decided to give himself further legitimacy by 'seeking' the support of his chosen politicians.

* * *

At the beginning of 1962 I received an invitation from the US State Department to visit America on what they called a 'Leadership Exchange Program'. Very soon after, I was asked by a number of my family members, in particular my brother Sher Jan, to stand for the local provincial seat in the forthcoming elections. Sher Jan had already discussed the issue with the resident family politician, our brother Mir Balakh Sher who it seems, had agreed with the idea when Sher Jan broached it with him. Initially, being familiar with the style of politics in Dera Ghazi Khan, I was not all that keen to participate. But Sher Jan was most persuasive. Largely due to his efforts, I decided to put the US Government's invitation in abeyance. I went from Karachi to Ozman to meet with my brother and then onwards to D. G. Khan. Much to our mutual surprise we learnt that

the so called Mazari Group had been prevailed upon to allow Ramzan Drishak to stand from our provincial seat. It seemed an absurd situation to us. Sher Jan and I were the ones who administered the affairs of the tribe, and as far as the Mazari tribe was concerned we were their natural leaders. But politics can be a strange pursuit. Sher Jan was belligerent, insisting that I file my nomination, but for once it was I who kept the calm - usually the position was quite the reverse. For the sake of family unity, I decided to return to Karachi and proceed with my planned trip to the US. Sher Jan also withdrew to the seclusion of his fort in Ozman. Earlier, disgruntled with the constant family intrigues taking place in Rojhan, he had also decided - like me - to set up home elsewhere. Some two years before, he had constructed a fort for himself at Ozman, in the tribal area, close to the Suleiman Range. He told me that he had come to enjoy the tranquility he found there away from the petty rivalries that existed in Rojhan at the time.

In April of the same year I left Pakistan for a prolonged trip overseas. Taking the opportunity, I decided to visit places that were considered rather exotic and off the beaten track on the way to the United States. And so, I saw Bangkok in pristine condition before the Vietnam - based US GI's ruined it. Commodore (later Admiral) Ahsan, who was Pakistan's representative to the SEATO in Thailand, insisted that I stay with him. Ahsan, a thorough gentleman and a splendid host, would ten years later, after his retirement as Naval Chief, become much esteemed for his role as the honorable and fair-minded governor of East Pakistan who did his utmost to preserve the unity of Pakistan. From Bangkok I flew to Hong Kong, which then lacked its now towering skyscrapers, and then on to Tokyo, which had begun its recovery from the devastation of the war. In Tokyo my old schoolmate Aziz Khan of Hoti, then Third Secretary at the Pakistan Embassy, was my host. A few days later I left for Honolulu, which was, especially the Waikiki area, unspoilt and still uncommercialized. During a visit to the University of Hawaii I was offered a scholarship to research Baloch history by Professor Ronald Anderson, their Director of Asian Studies. Amusingly, a few months later I received another similar offer, this time it was made by Dr Richard Fryre, Head of Persian Studies at Harvard University. It would seem that Baloch scholars were in short supply at American universities in the 60s!

From Hawaii it was the turn of continental United States, which was in its heyday with John Fitzgerald Kennedy as President. At that time there was no airport at Washington, DC. The plane landed at Baltimore where I was received by Major Harry Paynter of the US Air Force who drove me to my hotel at Washington. I was quite taken aback by the unexpected sight of poverty as we drove into the city. The route took us through a series of slums which existed close to the heart of Washington. In the US capital, the State Department had arranged for a Congressman, William Minshall of Illinois, to act as my host. The Congressman took me on a tour of the House of Representatives and the Senate, both of which were in session, and the remarkable Congressional Library, which has the largest repository of books in the world. Later I was taken to lunch in the

Congress dining room which was located under the large dome which dominated the building. Other guests at lunch included Aziz Ahmed, Pakistan's Ambassador, and Humayun Mirza, Iskander Mirza's son.

From Washington I travelled to Knoxville, Tennessee, where I was taken to the offices of the then famous Tennessee Valley Authority, and then onwards to Oklahoma where I stayed at Fort Sill with some American friends, Colonel John Glorio and his wife Vivian, who had recently returned from a posting in Karachi. Fort Sill had a gunners' school where I met a number of young Pakistani army officers who were undergoing training. I also took the opportunity of visiting the Apache chief Geronimo's tomb. From my childhood I had retained a lingering admiration for the Red Indians who had fought so courageously against such overwhelming odds. The Apache chief was one of the more notable warriors of his race, a remarkably brave man. From Oklahoma I ventured south to Miami, New Orleans and Texas. In the southern states discrimination against the American black race was still pervasive. There were signs on street benches, toilets and other public conveniences clearly stating the appalling words 'Whites Only'. The racism was only leveled at the Blacks, and as a Pakistani I never found any animosity or bias directed towards me. On the contrary, everywhere I went, I experienced extremely warm American hospitality. I continued on to Arizona, Nevada and California, where I visited Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento. At the state capital I was given the opportunity to meet with Governor Pat Brown, who stayed in power for a lengthy period until meeting defeat at the hands of Ronald Reagan in 1966.

I travelled extensively in the US and the few Americans I met who were familiar with Pakistan would begin by praising Ayub Khan. It was apparent that the Pakistani President's visit to the US in middle of 1961 had been a towering success. The second person they would invariably mention was Bashir, the Pakistani camel-driver who had recently visited the US at Vice-President Johnson's personal invitation. Coincidentally, when I arrived at Seattle to visit the World Fair that was being held there, I was received at the airport by Captain Saeed, formerly of the Pakistan Army, now a protocol officer of the US State Department. Saeed, who had once been an ADC to Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad, had married an American lady and had settled in the US. He had an interesting story to tell. It seems that at the time of Bashir the camel-driver's visit, the State Department had got into a flurry searching for an Urdu interpreter as Bashir could not utter a word in English. In their search they had discovered Saeed, who was quickly handed the job. Vice-President Johnson who seemed to enjoy taking Bashir around, took a liking to Saeed. It was a result of this that Saeed had found himself permanently employed by the State Department.

From Seattle I flew to Chicago. I spent a few days in this lakeside city and was quite impressed by its remarkable Natural History Museum. Then it was on to Philadelphia where I stayed with my friends Stan and Emma Hennimieyer. I took the opportunity of visiting the local university where I met two gifted scholars, Dr Dresden of the Persian

faculty, and the Arab specialist, Dr Goitein. A few days later Stan drove me through the fascinating Amish country, with its horse-carts and blackclad folk, to Princeton University where I remained a guest of Professor Phillip Hitti, the famous Arab historian. I spent two enlightening days at Princeton, where I was put up at superbly furnished Laurie House surrounded by five acres of beautiful grounds. The mansion contained some valuable furniture, including a bed and a set of drawers which once belonged to Napoleon Bonaparte, and we dined at a superbly crafted dining table which had been built for President Wilson. I still have a book on Arab history in my library which had been presented to me by its author, Phillip Hitti, as a memento of my visit.

I spent a few days in New York as a tourist. During my stay there I was hosted a meal at the United Nations restaurant by the Pakistani Consul-General, Hamdani. We were joined by Choudhury Zafarulla, Pakistan's outgoing Permanent Representative, Agha Shahi, the newly-designated Permanent Representative, and Javaid Iqbal, Allama Iqbal's son, who was on his way to a conference in Mexico. Finally I arrived in Boston to attend a six-week International Management seminar held at Harvard University. At the seminar there were participants from many other countries and it was pleasing to make their acquaintance. My friend, Bill Hall, the US Charge d' affaires at Karachi, had arranged for me to meet a number of leading academics at his Alma Mater, Harvard University. While there I met a number of people, the most noteworthy being Ed Mason, the Dean of the Harvard Business School and a professor named Henry Kissinger who was then advisor to President Kennedy. Little did I know when he took me out for lunch that Kissinger would have such a widespread impact on international affairs within a short span of years - but, I suppose, in 1962, neither did he.

After a lengthy three month stay in the United States, I went to London where I was joined by my wife. Together we travelled across Europe visiting Stockholm, Copenhagen, The Hague, Geneva and Paris before heading south to Rome and Vienna. At Istanbul we saw the relatively undeveloped city with its ancient buildings still dominating the skyline - the view over the Bosphorus still remains one of my favorite sights. After a brief few days in Teheran, I was back in Pakistan in October of 1962.

A few days after my return I was invited as chief guest to address the Baloch Student's Organization (BSO) at the Karachi University. Among the other guests present were Ali Buksh Talpur, Ali Ahmed Talpur, and Attaullah Mengal - who had recently been released on bail and was shortly to be re-arrested the following month. In my short speech I made a deliberate reference to the jailed Gul Khan Naseer to criticize the regime:

... he rightly deserves the title of the 'Rebel Poet of Balochistan' for the great service and sacrifices he has made. Let us therefore once again dedicate ourselves to help our Baloch brothers in whatever capacity we can. Their sacrifices will not

go in vain, and God willing, time will prove to everyone that in spite of the present darkness, dawn will arise.

Though the speech may seem tame by modern conventions, by the standards of Ayub Khan's reign it was bordering on the seditious.

For the next few months I remained busy with trips to Sonmiani and largely preoccupied with work which went under the general description of tribal affairs. The conditions in Balochistan had not improved during my absence, but in fact had worsened. The prolonged detention of the aged Nauroze Khan Zehri who was serving a life sentence,¹²⁹ the more recent arrests of Akbar Bugti, Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri, Gul Khan Naseer, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and others, had led to a situation simmering with discontent. In 1963 a loosely based guerrilla organization calling itself the Pararis had come into formation. Their numbers remained uncertain as they had established numerous armed camps in remoter areas of Balochistan. The Pararis claimed that by July 1963 they had established twenty-two base camps, each with 400 full-time volunteers and several hundred part-time reservists, spread over 45,000 square miles, from the Mengal tribal area of Jhalawan in the south, to the Marri-Bugti area in the north.¹³⁰

In February 1963 my friend Akbar Bugti now asked me to enlist the services of A. K. Brohi to act on his behalf. Brohi had been Akbar's tutor during his youth, and he felt sure that the lawyer would do his utmost to get him out of imprisonment. I visited A. K. Brohi at his offices and met with a keen response from him. The lawyer recalled his former pupil fondly and agreed to defend him in court. Imagine my surprise two days later when I returned to find a suddenly much chastened Brohi who now seemed very eager to do anything other than to defend Akbar Bugti! He had received a curt message from the government asking him to desist from helping Akbar. The self proclaim defender of law and liberty had cowed down abjectly, and understandably so, as a few days later the announcement was made of his appointment as high commissioner for Pakistan in Delhi.

A few weeks later in April Attaullah Mengal informed me of Mohammed Hussain Unka's plight. Unka was a Baloch intellectual who had been a close supporter of the Khan of Kalat's brother, Agha Abdul Karim. He had been in jail on a charge of sedition, and was having difficulty meeting his bail payment. My commitment to the cause was strong, and I paid the bail money without giving the matter a second thought. Ten thousand rupees was not a small amount in the early 1960s.

¹²⁹ Seven of his close relatives-including his young son-were hanged in Hyderabad and Sukkur jail.

¹³⁰ Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow, Baluch Nationalism an Soviet Temptations*, p. 52.

In August 1963 I was approached by a delegation of leaders from Balochistan who included, Meharullah Mengal (Attaullah Mengal's brother), Lai Buksh Rind, Muhammad Yusuf Naskandi, Kadir Buksh Mutahir, Akbar Barakzai, and a relation of mine, Saif-ur-Rehman Mazari,¹³¹ who spent most of his time in Quetta espousing the cause of Baloch nationalism. They persuaded me to make an effort to bridge the extreme divide between the regime and the Baloch leadership, most of whom were in jail. There was much distrust on both sides. The rulers viewed all Baloch as potential secessionists while the politically conscious among the Baloch felt that the people of Balochistan, still under the grip of Army occupation, were being forcefully administered as a colony by the bureaucrats and the generals and being denied their right to be treated as equal citizens in Pakistan.

I drafted a rather severe memorandum addressed to Ayub Khan stating the Baloch viewpoint, which included the following words:

We are first and foremost patriotic Pakistanis. Our fight is not against FM Ayub Khan or the Presidential system, but against the personality cult, unbridled dictatorship, and the bureaucratic system of law in the hands of the unsympathetic, and brutal attitude of the officials. We stand for a free and democratic society, adult franchise, and the rule of law. For this conviction we are willing to make any sacrifice and suffer for this just cause. Time and again we are told and threatened that we are fighting against a powerful regime with no hope of success. Let it be understood quite clearly that oppression in the long run does not succeed in suppressing the genuine desire of the people, and instead only brings them together and raises their morale. Governments and individuals come and go, but the country of Pakistan, with the Grace of Almighty, has come to stay.

These were hardly peaceful words written to a man convinced of his authority and destiny, but we were not prepared to shirk from our obligation to the people of Balochistan. Bluntness in stating facts was a traditional Baloch attribute (which I sadly find, now thirty years later, to have been largely diluted among the newer generations of the race). We also made the following demands which I have subsequently abridged for the sake of easy readability:

1. The release of all interned prisoners, withdrawal of all cases pending against them and restoration of their confiscated property.
2. The setting up of a Board of Inquiry under a High Court judge to examine the atrocities committed in Balochistan, and the guilty officials punished.

¹³¹ Saif-ur-Rehman Mazari was married to Sirdar Khair Buksh Marri's sister.

3. Creation of a university in Balochistan. Also making education compulsory as well as free. Construction of a college in each district, a high school in each *tehsil*, a middle school in each sub-*tehsil* and primary school in each sizeable village.
4. Balochi be recognized as a regional language and be used as a medium of instruction in all primary classes.
5. Construction of a hospital in each *tehsil* and dispensaries in every sizeable village.
6. Government servant grades of Class II, in and lower be reserved exclusively for those locally domiciled. All development works to recruit local labor.
7. Construction of roads and improved communications a must for Balochistan. The local harbors and fisheries to also be developed.
8. A complete abolition of the sirdari system.

The memorandum, which was signed by me as a leader of 'concerned Baloch' was delivered by hand to Ayub Khan by Maulana Bashani, who had offered to act as a go-between. I was to receive no reply from the Government.

In February 1964 I received a disastrous blow. On the ninth of that month I was at Sonmiani and ready to depart for Ozman to see my brother Sher Jan, when the *tehsil's* Deputy Superintendent of Police came to see me on some urgent work. He wasted a great deal of my time and as a result I had to postpone my departure. Early next morning I headed off to Ozman, driving my jeep accompanied by two retainers. The road to Guddu Barrage was still *kucha* and it took us more than two hours to reach Kashmor. Just before reaching Kashmor I was waved down by Saeed Khan, the *wadera* of the Mazari clan of Easiani. Looking very anxious, he approached my jeep window. In a concerned voice he told me, 'I have just heard that Sirdar Sher Jan Khan has been wounded. He has been taken to Rojhan to seek medical attention.' Then he added the words, 'I am sure he will be all right, it's probably only a minor wound.' Deeply distressed, I tried to take a small measure of confidence from the words 'he will be all right'. Saeed Khan insisted on accompanying me to check on my brother's welfare and I headed for Rojhan as fast as I could drive. A few miles after the turnoff from Kashmor, I saw a bus approaching. It stopped the moment the driver recognized my jeep. A number of men got out. They were all bare-headed. The removal of the traditional turban is a mark of mourning among the Baloch, and is usually done on the death of a senior member of the family or the sirdar of the tribe. As they approached me they broke down weeping and began beating their chests. My heart sank and I knew the

worst had happened. I had lost my brother. Without stopping to talk to the men, I desperately drove on. The thirty miles to Rojhan were akin to a personal nightmare. I was numbed with the deepest sense of grief I have experienced in my life.

All along the route every man we sighted was bareheaded, with his turban undone and loosely draped across his chest. They were all heading for Rojhan. The dusty road through the arid desert took over an hour to cross, and in a dazed state I reached Rojhan. I drove straight to our family old courthouse, the Mini. The ten acre open *maidan* in front of the building was filled with thousands of bewildered white-robed men who had spontaneously gathered upon hearing the news. More were joining them. I had to park my jeep at a distance as the way was completely blocked, and picked my way through the crowd on foot. Some of the men had rubbed dust in their hair, an ancient sign of deep grief. It was a harrowing sight which I will never forget. The whole tribe was gathering to share their grief at the unexpected death of their young thirty-four-year-old Sirdar. Sher Jan had devoted a great part of his life living among the tribe - the cities had held little interest for him. He had been a much-loved man.

Sher Jan had died late the previous night. Earlier, expecting my arrival at Ozman, he had posted men in the desert with lanterns in case I lost my way in the darkness of the desert. After his sudden death, every effort had been made to contact me. There were no telephones in those days. In the middle of the night, riders had been sent from Ozman to Sonmiani, a direct distance of some thirty-five miles. It had taken the messengers time to rouse the boatmen to ferry them across the river. They arrived in Sonmiani minutes after my departure. Having reached Rojhan, I now faced the tragic task of burying my brother on my own. Mir Balakh Sher had left Karachi by road as soon as he had heard the news, but it would take many hours before he reached. He finally arrived at one the next morning. The roads were very bad in those days. Necessity dictated that Sher Jan be buried within a twenty-four hour period.

For over forty days Mir Balakh Sher and I sat in mourning at Rojhan. Virtually every member of the Mazari tribe from all over came to join us in our grief. Food was served to the gathered multitude for six weeks as was our tradition. Others friends, neighboring Sirdars and well-wishers came from far and wide to express their sympathies. It took me a long time to recover from my loss. Sher Jan or Jani as he was affectionately called was a good-natured human being. He was always generous, thoughtful and loving to me - everything one could ask for in a brother. I had lost a supporting pillar in my life. A void had been created that still remains with me to this very day.

* * *

A few months later I faced the prospect of leading the election campaign for Miss Fatima Jinnah in district Dera Ghazi Khan. With Sher Jan no longer there to help share

the burden, the responsibility of looking after the whole Mazari area now largely devolved on me. Even after our brother's death, Mir Balakh Sher expressed little interest in tribal affairs.

Political parties opposed to Ayub Khan formed a new group calling itself Combined Opposition Parties (COP).¹³² The combined parties gladly received among their number anyone who was equally as determined to remove Ayub Khan from office. I naturally welcomed their offer and joined them. An early contender for the COP's presidential candidate was General Azam, who as governor of East Pakistan, had proved to be immensely popular and had a substantial following there. The fact that he was an ex-general and had participated in the declaration of Martial Law as a close associate of Ayub Khan, went, in the end, against his candidature.

Previously, Daultana, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali and a few others had approached Miss Fatima Jinnah and pleaded with her to stand against Ayub Khan, but Miss Jinnah found it difficult to place her trust in politicians. A few years earlier during the political debacle of the 1950s, Miss Jinnah had, not surprisingly, become disenchanted with politicians, and had gone as far as welcoming Ayub Khan's takeover. She had then hoped that the change would lead to a more stable form of government. The events that followed had led her to dislike the despotism of the regime, and the personality cult that had grown around the General. In the end it took Maulana Bashani¹³³ to convince her to overcome her distaste for politics. He pleaded with her that East Pakistan looked upon her as the symbol of democracy, and that she should not let down the people who had placed such high hopes on her. She finally agreed to be COP's presidential candidate.

Miss Jinnah possessed a firm and dauntless character. Being the sister of the founder of the country, she was held in great respect by the people who referred to her as 'Madar-i-Millat'. The public was much moved by the idea of the venerable and dynamic lady taking on the entrenched strong-man, Ayub Khan. Her appeal went directly to the hearts of the people as she fiercely attacked the man who had suppressed the freedoms of speech and expression. She called Ayub Khan a power-hungry dictator who had conspired for years to seize power, and alluded to the growing stories of nepotism and corruption implicating close members of the president's family. Miss Jinnah herself, possessed an unblemished reputation. Her campaign met with a tremendous response

¹³² It included the Council Muslim League led by Khwaja Nazimuddin Mumtaz Daultana; the Awami League led by Mujibur Rahman; the National Awami Party led by Wali Khan; the Nizam-i-Islam Party led by Chaudhry Muhammad Ali; and Jamaat-i-Islami (led by Maulana Maudoodi).

¹³³ Ironically Bashani was the first to back out on Miss Jinnah. His excuse at that time was that as China (his party's overseas mentor) had friendly relations with Ayub Khan's regime, he was not in a position to oppose Ayub Khan. Later, however it became an open secret that Bhutto, acting as Ayub's emissary, had bribed Bashani with Rs. 500,000 to ensure withdrawal of his support from the COP. Some years later I confronted Bashani with this accusation. The Maulana did not bother to deny it. He said that the money had been donated to help run his *madrassahs*.

among the public. But, as we all knew, the fate of the presidential election lay in the hands of the 80,000 BD members. The government had already made two very shrewd moves during the BD member election in October-November 1964. First, the Convention Muslim League did not nominate any official government candidates, which might have led to their possible rejection in favor of other candidates likely to be voting for Miss Jinnah. Instead the government planned to win over a majority of the newly elected BD members by patronage and coercive pressure during the two-month gap leading to the presidential elections. The other clever stratagem was the decision to hold the National Assembly elections after the presidential one. If the Assembly elections had been held earlier, the government would have been forced to give its support to the leader of one particular faction in a rural area, thereby automatically antagonizing the leaders of the other local factions. By avoiding the early selection of the government candidate, the government ensured support from most of the feuding landowning factions.

On 24 December, the COP held a public meeting in Dera Ghazi Khan. Those gathered there included Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, Mushtaq Gurmani, Mahmood Ali Kasuri, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, my brother Mir Balakh Sher, Sirdar Zulfiqar AH Khosa, Khwaja Nizamuddin of Taunsa, Sirdar Ramzan Drishak and many more. It was attended by a very large crowd who were much moved, some to tears, when Habib Jalib, the popular poet, recited his well-known poems criticizing the regime: '*Mein nahin manta, mein nahin janta*', directed at the one-man Constitution, and '*Bachon par goli challi*', which described the death of a student protestor who had been shot by the police. The public meeting went extremely well, and news of this unprecedented 'achievement' reached Kalabagh. The Governor soon brought the full force of the local administration against us.

Shortly after the meeting, I received a telegram from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then Foreign Minister. The message simply said, 'Come to Karachi'. When I arrived at Karachi he came over to visit me. He told me that he had come as a friend and wanted to give the best possible advice. The purpose of his mission was obvious - he wanted me to withdraw my support for Miss Jinnah. Bhutto insisted on referring to Miss Jinnah derisively calling her '*Budhi*', and his language towards her often descended to the gutter level, much to my distress. He argued,

If tomorrow a war breaks out with India [it is significant that he referred to an event which was to take place only a few months later] what would you expect a frail old woman to do? She would be disastrous placed in a situation like that. Ayub Khan is a man, a strong one at that. The country needs his rule. We need a savior like Attaturk, and Ayub Khan is the man for the job.

In return, I told him that it was inconceivable for me to support Ayub Khan. Not only did I oppose the type of rule that he had foisted upon the country, but I had also made a

commitment. A commitment which I firmly believed in. As far as the issue of Miss Jinnah was concerned, I told him that it was we, the members of the COP, who had persuaded the lady to take a stand. It was now unthinkable for me to betray her. And so, my meeting with Bhutto ended on a note of disagreement. He was upset by the fact that he had been unable to convince me, and left in a huff. Things would never be quite the same between us ever again.

On my return to Sonmiani I went to work on Miss Jinnah's campaign. In 1964 there were probably only two or three dozen privately owned vehicles in all of D. G. Khan district, the largest in Punjab. Unlike the rural campaigns of today when each candidate has convoys of seventy or so vehicles - mostly hired trailing him, mine was a one-vehicle show. Along with people such as my friend Zulfiqar Khosa, and a number of other prominent residents of the district, we covered every part of the district from Taunsa in the north to Kandhkot which lay over a hundred miles to the south in district Jacobabad. I travelled in my solitary but sturdy Willy's jeep, with a specially constructed lantern¹³⁴ affixed to its bonnet. Nearly all the roads in our backward district were still *kucha*, and dust became a constant companion during the gruelling weeks leading up to the election.

Kalabagh kept true to form. He appointed a special task force to deal with the Opposition activity in D. G. Khan. His chosen men consisted of Muhammad Khan (the Leghari Sirdar),¹³⁵ and Ashiq Mazari (a senior CSP Officer).¹³⁶ These two together, with the local Deputy Commissioner, Choudhry Bashir Ahmed, and the local Police Superintendent, Nawazish Ali, and Mian Samad, political assistant for the D. G. Khan tribal areas, would hold daily meetings to chalk out the government's campaign of repression. Soon we faced the full wrath of the local government administration which was being closely supervised by the governor's special task force. Their first step was to disconnect the supply of irrigation water to our lands at Sonmiani. As we had no other source of irrigation in those days, our crops suffered. This was followed by instigation of criminal cases involving murder, abduction and dacoity against four of my close relations. Another relative who held the charge of the tribal area's border military police was soon sacked from his job. Thinking that they had dealt with us, they then turned their attention on the individual BD members. Towards the end they even inflicted a reign of terror on the shopkeepers of Rojhan and some of our less prominent

¹³⁴ Miss Jinnah's and the COP's election symbol was a lantern.

¹³⁵ Sirdar Muhammad Khan Leghari had earlier, in 1960, been rebuffed the regime for allegedly approving a previously rejected extension to the 'Gadai Minor' canal for the sole benefit of himself and his family members while he had been the provincial minister for public works in Punjab. Using his link with Kalabagh-whose son was married to his daughter-he had managed to get back into government favor.

¹³⁶ Ashiq Mazari had by now become a habitual opponent of the Mazar chief family. The fault was not all his. Due to reasons of his birth his close family members had refused to acknowledge him and had even tried to deny him his inheritance. The hostility that this had generated on his part had led to almost a permanent state of enmity.

supporters, to illustrate the full extent of the government's power and the helplessness of the tribe's leaders to confront it.

In D. G. Khan district the elections were quite shamelessly rigged. In the north, from D. G. Khan to Taunsa, the police *thanaydars* had physically rounded up all the BD members on the eve of election day, and kept them in custody until the next morning when they cast their votes under close police supervision. Taunsa was already quite notorious as during the BD elections held a couple of months 'earlier, the police superintendent had got seven pro-government BD members of Taunsa elected by the simple use of coercion, accompanied by false ballots.

By election day I was already aware of two other locations where unfair electoral practices had abounded. One of these was the Marri-Bugti tribal area in Balochistan. As the area lay adjacent to Mazari territory, I attempted a journey to Sui on 1 January 1965 only to find that the road had been strategically cut off - by a twenty foot wide trench - as it wound its way around some hills. Similarly, Miss Jinnah's election agent for the area was prevented from making the journey to Dera Bugti. He made two attempts to get there, but the security forces would not let him venture anywhere close. Later it was announced that 100 percent of the Bugti votes were cast in favor of Ayub Khan. In the 1960s the Bugti tribe was solidly behind their jailed chief Akbar Bugti, who had been incarcerated directly on Ayub Khan's instructions. The election results from the Bugti area were worse than dubious. Later I was to learn that the local *tehsildar*, who was the presiding officer for the area, had marked all the ballot papers himself.

The second location was the town of Kashmor in Sindh. To my personal knowledge the *mukhtiarkar*, in his capacity as the presiding officer, had called upon each of the local BD members, in person, two days before the elections. Some he chose to bribe, others he intimidated with coercive threats. In one instance the *mukhtiarkar* told a BD member named Hazoor Buksh that his brother who had been dismissed from his job on corruption charges - would be reinstated as a *patwari*, once Hazoor Buksh had voted for Ayub Khan. The officialdom had many other methods of garnering votes for their candidate, and when all else failed, then the police was always present to administer the necessary dose of terror to ensure compliance.¹³⁷

As Miss Jinnah's polling agent for the Rajanpur *tehsil* in Punjab, and the Kashmor *taluka* in Sindh, I had almost daily run-ins with the administration. On election day I visited the polling booth to find Ayub Khan's framed photograph prominently displayed on the wall. I protested to the presiding officer, the local Assistant Commissioner, that either he display an equally prominent photograph of Miss Jinnah alongside on the

¹³⁷ Darya Khan Khoso, local pro-government politician, arranged for handgun licenses-which were extremely difficult to obtain in those days-for a number of Kashmor's BD members. When these members went to the Deputy Commissioner's office to get his signature sanctioning their licenses, they were asked to swear on the Koran that they would vote for Ayub Khan before the requisite signature was provided.

wall, or else he should remove Ayub Khan's picture immediately from the premises. The government officer insisted that as Ayub Khan was the President of Pakistan he was entitled to have his portrait displayed in the polling station. My insistence that both Miss Jinnah and Ayub Khan were presidential candidates and deserved to be accorded equal treatment on election day, failed to impress the by now agitated government officer. At this juncture one of my supporters, Lai Shah, decided to take the matter into his own hands. He leapt at the wall, grabbed Ayub Khan's picture and tore it to shreds before anyone could stop him. News of this incident soon spread throughout the area. It did not take long for this relatively minor news from distant Rajanpur to reach Lahore. I later learnt that Governor Kalabagh was aghast at the news. He is said to have exclaimed, 'How dare anyone desecrate the picture of the Father of the Nation in this manner!', or words of a similar effect. The servile veneration that the feudal classes of Pakistan unceasingly sink to, in their worship of the sources of power in our country, never ceases to amaze me. A few days after this event at the polling booth I was charged with sedition and anti-State activities.

In D. G. Khan district the majority of the tribal sirdars¹³⁸ had supported COP and had soon found themselves pitched against the full force of the Kalabagh government. The same, however, did not apply to the other rural areas of West Pakistan. In most rural areas the government, with all its patronage and coercive powers at its command, could easily de-stabilize the prevailing social hierarchies. Not surprisingly, in Sindh and Punjab the politically powerful and influential land-owning classes had largely aligned themselves with the government. The Governor of West Pakistan, Malik Amir Muhammad Khan Kalabagh, was a man from their own class and knew how to forcefully enlist their support. Consequently, the *pirs*, *mukhdooms*, *maliks*, *waderas* of Sindh and southern Punjab, safeguarding their self interest, had assisted their local deputy commissioners and police officials in loyally assembling pro-government votes. In other areas the situation was far from dissimilar. Balochistan had by now become a fiefdom of the government officials, and votes for Ayub Khan were amassed by any and every means possible. In East Pakistan, where Ayub Khan had come to be hated, the Governor Abdul Monem Khan, who has been described as 'the most execrated man in his province',¹³⁹ had by the heavy use of official patronage and distribution of development funds, disabled much of this hostility among the East Pakistani BD members.¹⁴⁰ At that time the government party's coffers were, unlike the COP's, well filled. The newly enriched business magnates had been asked to contribute funds

¹³⁸ With the sole exception of the Leghari Sirdar. Two days before the elections, due to the tremendous pressure exerted by the administration, the Opposition tribes were reduced to two: the Mazaris and the Khosas (thanks to the resilience shown by my friend Zulfiqar Khosa). The others-the Gurchanis, Drishaks, Bozdars, Lunds and Qaiseranis-had been forced to join the government camp.

¹³⁹ Herbert Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis*, op. cit., p. 174.

¹⁴⁰ In East Pakistan it was not the Deputy Commissioner but the sub-divisional bureaucrat, the Circle Officer Development, responsible for the allocation of development funds, who emerged as the main force in pressurizing and persuading the BD members to vote for Ayub Khan. (Khalid Bin Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, op. cit., pp. 238-9).

generously. In some cases secret tariffs were fixed.¹⁴¹ As a result of this concerted effort, the business community poured large amounts of money to fund Ayub Khan's campaign.

The public had responded to Miss Jinnah with such enthusiasm that even 'most of the press people agreed that if the contest were direct election, she would win against Ayub'.¹⁴² But the public had been disenfranchised. In the end, Miss Jinnah received 28,345 votes from the BD members, whom, had she won, would have become politically extinct by Miss Jinnah's determination to revive the direct adult franchise system. It was still a remarkable performance when one considers the strenuous efforts the government made to bring about her defeat. It was obvious to me that the elections had been shamelessly influenced, and particularly so in the rural areas. Even Bhutto, who had been one of the key organizers of Ayub Khan's 1964 re-election campaign, later privately admitted to one of his confidantes that the elections had been anything but fair.¹⁴³

I met Miss Fatima Jinnah a few days after the elections at her residence at the Mohatta Palace in Karachi. I recall she had a little dog nestled in her lap throughout our meeting. There were three other dogs scampering about the room barking at each other. 'You don't mind dogs do you?' she had asked me with an initial show of concern. She was a direct and forceful lady, using words sparingly. As we began discussing the elections, I soon realized that she had little concept of the government machinery that had been unleashed against her. Having led a sheltered life in relative isolation, she was unaware of the hold that the bureaucracy and police had over the rural areas. Nor did she understand the nature of the feudal system, which habitually supported whomsoever was the ruling power of the day. I attempted to explain to Miss Jinnah the means by which the government had wrested the election from her. I mentioned instances of police terror and others where money and other inducements had changed hands. Miss Jinnah refused to consider these reasons as sufficient, 'If the people had been determined, they would have cast their votes for me regardless of the difficulties they had to face.' She seemed quite bitter and was of the opinion that the leading politicians had let her down, and did not bother to mince her words.

* * *

Ayub Khan in his victory speech assured the country that 'no trace of malice, nor of revenge should inhibit us from rejoicing in the glory of the people'. It would appear by subsequent events that his favored son, the retired army captain, Gohar Ayub, chose to

¹⁴¹ Copies of two secret letters issued by All-Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) to its members were published in the Weekly Mail of Karachi. These letters requested its members to contribute a levy of Rs. 2 per spindle and Rs. 25 per loom. The total income from this source was meant to provide Ayub Khan's party chest with Rs. 1.5 crore.

¹⁴² Khalid Bin Sayeed, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

¹⁴³ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan 1967-1977*, Oxford University Press, 1996. p. 327.

ignore his father's words! In West Pakistan, Karachi was the sole city to defy the pro-government trend of the elections.¹⁴⁴ On 4 January, despite the Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure which allowed a magistrate to prohibit making of speeches or the holding of processions on the grounds that it might lead to a disturbance of peace imposed in Karachi at that time, Gohar Ayub led a large victory procession into the heart of the Opposition belt in the city to places such as Golimar-sowing for the first time, the germs of ethnic divide in Karachi. That night havoc was wreaked in these parts of the city as Gohar Ayub's supporters inflicted their vengeance by burning down huts and other dwelling places, and firing upon its residents. Those attacked defended themselves, and a night-long conflict took place. It is believed that scores of people died, contrary to official reports of twenty killed. By this senseless and stupid act, Gohar Ayub ensured that Karachi would become implacably opposed to his father's regime.

At this stage more mention should be made of Gohar Ayub. Not much can be gleaned about his short army career other than the fact that he acted as ADC to his father, and that he used to accompany him on his presidential trips overseas.¹⁴⁵ As a retired military officer, having held the relatively junior rank of captain, he was soon transformed into a major business magnate. The General Motors car assembly plant was converted to form Gandhara Industries, which was jointly established in 1963 by Gohar Ayub and his father-in-law, General Habibullah Khan Khattak. His other holdings included an investment company and a canning venture. The retired Army captain's wealth was estimated by foreign specialist, Dr Franz Pick, a few years later, to be in the vicinity of US \$4 million.¹⁴⁶ Dr Pick also estimated that the total wealth of Ayub Khan and his family to be in the range of US \$10 to \$20 million. For a man who had, only a few years earlier, forced his way to power at gunpoint with the self professed aim of eradicating the corrupt 'sharks and leeches', this was a savage indictment.

Corruption in its nefarious forms began virtually at the conception of Pakistan with the gross misuse in the distribution of evacuee property. The theft and deliberate miscalculation of evacuee property was committed largely by the bureaucrats and a handful of politicians. As Choudhry Zafarulla Khan commented with justifiable anger:

This was not committed by the have nots and the destitute, but largely by those who had suffered from no privation and had not been subjected to any loss. They became known as the local affluent refugees. Some of them gorged themselves with carrion, were severely infected with moral leprosy and doubtless transmitted the poison to the next generation.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Of the total 1890 valid votes cast in Karachi, 1049 favored Miss Jinnah and Ayub got 837. The remaining 4 went to the other two candidates.

¹⁴⁵ (Lieut.-General) M. Attiqur Rahman, *Back to the Pavilion*, Karachi, 1989, p. 130.

¹⁴⁶ Dr Franz Pick, World Currency Report, April 1969.

¹⁴⁷ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *The Agony of Pakistan*, Kent Publications, UK, 1974, p. 161.

Corruption continued to slowly prosper and grow. Allegations were made of commissions received by a member of Governor Ghulam Muhammad's family, but Iskander Mirza despite all the accusations made against him was financially scrupulous.¹⁴⁸ Under Ayub Khan nepotism and corruption entered a new phase, it openly entered the public domain. Also, for the first time direct financial inducements - in the guise of cash, import licenses, transport route permits, licenses to construct factories and bank loans and other money making schemes - were given to politicians in return for their support. Previously the temptation of holding office was considered to be sufficient incentive in itself to a politician, but not anymore. In the heavily controlled commercial environment businessmen began offering money and other inducements to bureaucrats who could assist them in obtaining lucrative licenses and other government sanctions. Urban plots became a temptation, as well, for those in power, in one case an area designated as a suburban park was chosen by Gohar Ayub to build his large Karachi house. The concept that the law could not be equally applied to the politically privileged was taking a powerful turn for the worse.

It was during Ayub Khan's regime that the armed forces began to enjoy special new privileges. The General, unimpressed with the democratic system, wanted to keep his most powerful constituency on his side. Other members of the military soon got a novel opportunity to indulge in money-making activities. Unlike their counterparts in neighboring India with whom they shared a common history, the Pakistani military began to enjoy exceptional privileges. Apart from the vast amounts of farm land distributed among its officers, which I have mentioned earlier, new housing societies were also developed for them. Officers bought urban property at extremely reasonable prices only to sell them lucratively at commercially higher rates. Retired officers no longer went to the seclusion of their homes, they became diplomats, heads of public sector companies, provincial governors and on occasion, even wealthy industrialists. In time some of our senior-most soldiers were to develop a taste for luxury, which I might add, was totally at odds with the requirements of their chosen profession.¹⁴⁹

A few months after the 1965 elections, our armed forces were severely put to the test. The heroism and valour shown by the *jawans* and young officers during the days of conflict made their countrymen justifiably proud of them. Not being jingoistically young any more, I can state that it is my belief all wars are abominable. As the successful British general - hero of Waterloo - the Duke of Wellington, once said, 'The

¹⁴⁸ The former President was to face a relatively impoverished existence during his many years of exile.

¹⁴⁹ This was the beginning of a new culture among our military which would eventually lead to our generals, air chief marshals and admirals driving in prohibitively expensive Mercedes-Benz cars, accompanied of course with a plethora of convoy vehicles and a cacophony of sirens. The Indian Army, which shares its pre-Partition history with our forces, still maintains its more spartan accoutrements, which suits a soldier's life concerned solely with the defence of his country. During my days at cadet college we were taught that officers had to lead the *jawans* by setting an example. What sort of an example can a senior officer cocooned in modern comforts set to his subordinates these days?

next greatest misfortune to losing a battle, is to gain a victory.' Wars cause needless death of the young, and in their wake leave thousands sadly crippled, young wives widowed, innocent children orphaned. Wars also create economic havoc which impoverish nations for many years to come. The only justifiable war, in my book, is the one in which a country is forced to fight to defend its territory against invasion. It is a war of necessity and it has to be fought regardless of consequences.

The trouble started on 4 April 1965 when Indian forces occupied a Pakistani outpost at Ding in the Rann of Kutch. The Pakistan Army retaliated in the brief war that ensued, and successfully pushed back the Indians from the disputed area. Despite a cease-fire agreement that followed, tensions between the two countries remained high. The Kutch incident created a strong feeling of animosity towards India. Unfortunately, due to the abject performance of the Indian troops during the conflict, the Pakistani leadership also became convinced of the near invincibility of its own troops, which was to have dangerous consequences.¹⁵⁰ It was now that the Kashmir Cell, which had been previously set up by the government, decided to implement a new policy.

The Kashmir Cell was chaired by Aziz Ahmed, Secretary Foreign Affairs, and consisted of Defence Secretary Nazir Ahmed, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, and two senior army officers, Generals Sher Bahadur and Gul Hassan Khan.¹⁵¹ The Cell was greatly influenced by the views of Aziz Ahmed and his Minister, Zulfikar AH Bhutto. Bhutto had also taken to lobby the Army directly by visiting senior officers at their residences, and seeking to impress them with the indispensibility of launching raids across the Cease-Fire Line. These visits led General Musa to complain to Ayub Khan that Bhutto was brainwashing his officers.¹⁵² It must be remembered that Ayub Khan, despite his grandiosely self-imposed rank of Field Marshal, had little combat experience. His much acclaimed posting at the Burma front during the Second World War had been very brief.¹⁵³ Having only recently won the elections, (albeit with blatant rigging) the presidential ego was now tempted by a chance to acquire further glory by adding the laurels of victory to his name. In the summer of 1965, Bhutto advised the President that it was now time to 'hit back hard' at India¹⁵⁴ that would help restore his image. Later during a Cabinet Committee meeting, the Foreign Minister informed the

¹⁵⁰ It would lead Ayub Khan to write: 'As a general rule Hindu morale would not stand more than a couple of hard blows...', Ayub Khan to General Musa, 29 August 1965, Annexure G to GHQ letter no. 4050/57 MO-1, 1 August 1973, held in Bhutto Family Archives, (cited in: Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 90

¹⁵¹ Stanley Wolpert, *op. cit.* p. 89.

¹⁵² General Muhammad Musa, *My Version*, Wajidalis, Lahore, 1983, p. 10.

¹⁵³ (Lieut.-General) M. Attiqur Rahman, *op. cit.*, p. 83. In his memoirs, my friend Shaukat Hayat Khan is much more merciless on Ayub Khan. He states that General Reece of the British Army had once told him that he 'had sent [Ayub Khan] back from Burma when he showed tactical timidity': Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *The Nation That Lost Its Soul*, Jang Publishers, 1995, p. 182-3.

¹⁵⁴ A memorandum sent by Bhutto to Ayub, held in Bhutto Family Archives, (cited in: Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, *op. cit.*, p. 89).

President that 'a popular revolt was sweeping the whole of Indian-held Kashmir'.¹⁵⁵ And so at Bhutto's behest and with Ayub Khan's approval, 'Operation Gibraltar' came into existence.

The aim of Operation Gibraltar was originally twofold: one was to train local Kashmiris in the art of sabotage and then send them into Indian-held Kashmir, and the other was to train guerrillas and unleash them across the Cease-Fire Line. The intention of Operation Gibraltar was to disrupt the situation in the Srinagar Valley and create conditions whereby the emboldened local populace would rise against the Indian Army of occupation using weapons provided by Pakistan. Once the Valley was under a state of armed rebellion, thus keeping the Indian Army suitably preoccupied, the proposed supplementary Operation Grand Slam would then take place. Under Grand Slam, Akhnur was to be captured. This would sever the only road link between India and Kashmir, thereby isolating and preventing the five divisions of Indian troops in Kashmir from obtaining further supplies from India. Both of these operations were based upon two vital assumptions. These assumptions had largely resulted from fanciful thinking on Bhutto's part. As a self-proclaimed foreign policy and Kashmir specialist, he had assured Ayub Khan that once Operation Gibraltar commenced the people of Indian-held Kashmir would throw off their shackles and rise against their oppressors. He also managed to convince the President that India would never retaliate by crossing the international border.

By mid-August some 7000 trained guerrillas led by Pakistan Army officers crossed the Cease-Fire Line and launched their attack. The Indians were caught by surprise, but the people of occupied Kashmir refused to rise in a war of liberation and engage the attention of the Indian forces. Some of the Kashmiris even informed on the guerrillas leading to their early capture. Memories of the atrocities committed by the tribal *lushkar* of 1947 had probably not been entirely erased. This miscalculation allowed the Indian Army, after some initial setbacks, to begin attacks all along the Cease-Fire Line to seal the guerrilla bases in Azad Kashmir. This was followed by an all-out attack on Azad Kashmir with the intention of capturing its capital, Muzaffarabad. The Pakistani troops provided valiant resistance against this heavy onslaught. It was clearly now time to launch the counter-offensive, Operation Grand Slam. On the night of 31 August Major-General Akhtar Hussain Malik, commander of the 12th Division, was allowed to launch Operation Grand Slam. On 6 September, responding to Pakistan Army's offensive towards Akhnur, the Indian Army attacked near Lahore. Open war had begun.

It is not my intention to discuss the military aspects of the 1965 War in this book. It is the political aspects and the role played by the country's leadership that is of concern here. In his book General Gul Hassan insists that communication prepared by his Directorate of Operations, signed by the Commander-in-Chief General Musa, and sent

¹⁵⁵ Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan-Pakistan's First Military Ruler*, Sang-e-Meel, Lahore, 1993, p. 315-6.

to General Ayub, clearly stated in unambiguous words that Indian reaction to Operation Gibraltar would be violent and that they would not confine the retaliation to the territory of Kashmir alone. This is corroborated by General Musa who insists that he warned the President of 'the dangers inherent in the Foreign Office proposal'.¹⁵⁶ It appears that the President chose to ignore the advice given by his own soldiers and instead followed the 'wisdom' proffered by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his Foreign Office. Not surprisingly, after the war had ended Ayub Khan was to tell Mumtaz Bhutto, 'Your cousin is a madman. Don't follow him! He'll lead you astray, get you into trouble'.¹⁵⁷

Once more the *jawans* and young officers of our armed forces displayed great valour and fought the invaders with intensity. Many died, more were injured, new orphans and widows were created, but Pakistan was in a state of euphoria. As in all wars, the first casualty was the truth. Under the control of the wily Altaf Gauhar we were subjected to an intense campaign of wartime propaganda. Fed a battery of 'sugar-coated' truths and mistruths, the public's emotions were greatly heightened and it became convinced that the Indians were going to be trounced any day. The reality was sadly different. The eagerly awaited Pakistani counter-offensive code named 'Mailed Fist' launched from an area near Kasur ran aground by 11 September in the waterlogged fields of Khem Karan. The abrupt ending of the counter-offensive led to a sudden collapse of Pakistan's entire military strategy. Without the possibility of any further decisive offensive, the war was effectively over. Ironically, by engaging in his propaganda campaign with such gusto, Gauhar had doomed his mentor. Ayub Khan's subsequent efforts to end the war would expose him to the charge of 'snatching defeat from the jaws of victory'.

Modern warfare, as we know, cannot subsist on sheer bravery alone. Its demands feed upon a heavy and constant supply of logistics; guns are no good without ammunition; planes need bombs; fuel is not only required by tanks and airplanes but also by trucks that supply troops engaged in battle at the front. After sixteen days of open war, the Pakistan Army was running short of vital material. Our armed forces were dependant on supplies of war material from abroad, particularly from the United States of America. US military aid to both Pakistan and India was cut-off the moment war broke out. India managed to maintain weaponry from other sources but the embargo caused a greater problem for Pakistan. A large part of our army supplies and virtually all of our air force's requirement were dependant on American equipment. Ayub Khan knew how perilously low the supply of bombs and bullets were. He was, unlike the public who were caught up in Altaf Gauhar's world of propaganda, aware of the exact losses in lives, planes and tanks and had to accept the reality of the situation. The President agreed to a cease-fire which took place on 23 September 1965. In January 1966 peace talks were held at Tashkent at the invitation of the Soviet Prime Minister, Aleksei

¹⁵⁶ General Muhammad Musa, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

Kosygin. Under the Tashkent Declaration both sides agreed to withdraw their troops to the positions they had held prior to 5 August 1965 (i.e., before the commencement of Operation Gibraltar).

At the time of the September cease-fire it must have become apparent to Ayub Khan that he had gambled in Kashmir and lost. The aims of Operation Gibraltar and Operation Grand Slam had not been achieved, the Srinagar Valley had not been wrested from Indian control. He had been wrong to think that there would be a general uprising in Kashmir. He was wrong also in believing that the Indians would not extend the conflict outside Kashmir's Cease-Fire Line. The resulting war with India, a costly event in both lives and expenditure, had yielded no winners nor any visible gains—despite the fact that Pakistani soldiers had withstood a more numerous enemy and fought them to a standstill, in itself a remarkable achievement. It would be normal in these circumstances for Ayub Khan to place blame on those that had advised him to pursue this venture.¹⁵⁸ Bhutto knew by now that his role as the key subordinate in Ayub Khan's regime had come to an end.

* * *

On the evening of 6 October Bhutto rang me. I remember the incident well as it was my birthday. My wife had prepared a special tea with cake and her usual delicious selection of snacks and titbits. My children had gathered around the tea table when the telephone rang. Bhutto sounded dejected and wanted me to come over. I told him that I was busy with a family birthday, not wishing to reveal that in fact it was mine. But he was very insistent, even to the extent of sounding a bit desperate. 'You must come, I have to see you', he said with his voice strangely breaking with emotion. Left with little choice, I had to desert the family gathering and leave for 70 Clifton. On entering the house I saw his wife Nusrat standing on the staircase with a worried look on her face. She then waved me forward 'Zulfi's in his bedroom waiting for you'. When I entered the room I found him lying prone on his bed looking very shattered. He got up and approached me. I noticed his eyes were unusually bloodshot. He then gripped me in a tight embrace and tears began flowing down his face. 'I am sorry Sherbaz, I truly am sorry', he said. I was naturally a bit dumbfounded by his behavior. Bhutto then continued, 'I should have supported Miss Jinnah myself. I made a big mistake.' I uttered a few words of solicitude to calm him down, and after a while I succeeded. He finally let go of me and we both sat down.

For the next hour Bhutto lambasted Ayub Khan and the Army. He said to me, 'These useless miserable people refused to take my advice. If they had then they wouldn't have lost this wretched war.' Then he ranted at Ayub Khan. 'It was I who made Ayub Khan

¹⁵⁸ Ayub later referred to the 1965 War as 'my weakest and fatal point'. He said that he had been greatly misled by the Foreign Ministry duo of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Aziz Ahmed: G. W. Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 20.

respected overseas. Without my help he would have been an international nothing. I served him loyally for so long, and now the bastard has ditched me. Now he is making me eat shit and soon he will sack me.' Then he launched into a diatribe against General Musa, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. After abusing him copiously, he began questioning the General's courage and military acumen. Before the evening was over, he lambasted the army generals for being imbeciles. 'If they had only listened to me, Kashmir would have been ours.' I listened to him in silence, not wishing to point out to him that he was not acknowledged to be an expert on military strategy. It was an evening of tirades which I patiently bore up with. Seeing the state he was in, I actually felt sorry for him. He was under immense pressure and wished to let out steam by talking to someone. I had realized by then that Bhutto had chosen me because, as a friend as well as an opponent of the regime, I would not betray his inner thoughts to his colleagues in power. During the war Bhutto had excited the public with his emotionally charged speeches, including the one in which he had declared, 'We will wage a war for a thousand years.' In the aftermath of the war he had emerged as a national hero in the eyes of the jingoistic masses, but within 'the government his influence had plummeted. Only his wartime public popularity had prevented his early dismissal. He was even snubbed by Ayub Khan during the Tashkent talks.¹⁵⁹ Though he vented his rage privately, publicly he continued to defend the Tashkent Declaration and tried his best to retain his job as Foreign Minister, but it was to no avail.¹⁶⁰ By March he was dismissed as secretary-general of the Convention Muslim League. On 20 June 1966 he was sacked from his office of Minister for Foreign Affairs by Ayub Khan, though the pretext then officially given was 'a leave granted for health reasons'. He was ensconced in a special government railway car and sent to Karachi. Ayub Khan, wary of Bhutto's public popularity, wanted to ensure that he remained silent, so, on the way it was arranged that Bhutto meet with Governor Kalabagh at Lahore. A huge and enthusiastic crowd received Bhutto at the Lahore station, but he refused to utter a word to them. During his meeting with the Governor, he was read out the Riot Act and told in no uncertain terms what his future would entail if he decided to publicly oppose the government. Bhutto arrived at Karachi totally cowed down. Malik Amir Muhammad Khan of Kalabagh had acquired such a reputation for oppression that even Bhutto was terrified of him. The ex-foreign minister soon left for an extended government-paid trip overseas specially arranged so that he would stay out of the public eye. It was only when Kalabagh left office three months later that the political field appeared less filled with dread for Bhutto. He returned to Pakistan a few weeks later in October having regained some of his lost confidence.

¹⁵⁹ Ayub Khan's snubs are confirmed by Stanley Wolpert who states that the President insisted on meeting Shastri on his own, and on one occasion extended a forefinger forcing Bhutto to back away from joining them. Ayub also began having solitary meetings with Altaf Gauhar, and Bhutto was no longer accorded this presidential privilege. (Stanley Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 100).

¹⁶⁰ Bhutto defended the Tashkent Declaration in his speeches before the National Assembly on 14 and 16 March 1966, and in his press statement issued at Larkana on 15 January 1966 (this is also confirmed by: Hamid Yusuf, *Pakistan in Search of a Democracy*, Afrasia Publications, Lahore, 1980, p. 85).

A few weeks after his return, my wife and I were invited to the Bhuttos' for lunch. The only thing I remember of that particular occasion was an episode involving a foreign correspondent from *The Times*. The correspondent had recently returned from Rawalpindi where he had interviewed Ayub Khan. During lunch Bhutto asked the man, 'Did Ayub mention anything about me during the interview?' The correspondent replied in the negative, whereupon Bhutto turned livid with rage and exploded into a loud abusive harangue against Ayub Khan. The words he used in the presence of the lady guests were quite unnecessary. I decided to leave early that day. On the way home, my wife, Souriya, made it clear to me that this would be the last time she would visit the Bhutto household. Despite her friendship with Nusrat, whose marital problems had aroused a great deal of compassion on her part, Souriya refused to enter 70 Clifton until some years after Bhutto had died.

* * *

In September 1966 Ayub Khan dropped the second key member of his regime. He sacked Kalabagh. The immediate reasons for his departure lay in the events surrounding a bye-election at Karachi. Mahmood Haroon, having become a minister in the West Pakistan Government, had to vacate his National Assembly seat which he had won from Lyari. The Haroons considered the Lyari area to be their political bailiwick and wished the replacement candidate to be someone who would support their interests. They did not approve of Hafiz Habibullah Piracha who was lobbying for the official Convention Muslim League ticket. Instead, they chose Ghous Buksh Bizenjo to be their man. The Governor, Kalabagh, did not approve of Piracha either. In a display of 'feudal arrogance' Kalabagh dismissed the idea of supporting Piracha, whom in a fit of rage, he disparagingly referred to 'as nothing more than a son of a petty shopkeeper from Makhud'.¹⁶¹ Initially Kalabagh did not care for Bizenjo either, insisting that he was a secessionist. To placate him the Haroons took Bizenjo to meet Kalabagh, where Bizenjo, the ever consummate politician, now reached an understanding with the Governor. In return Kalabagh agreed to support him. In the meantime Ayub Khan had already approved Hafiz Habibullah Piracha as the official government candidate for the bye-election, A showdown was on the cards.

When the elections were held in late May 1966, Kalabagh, the Haroons and Jam Ghulam Qadir of Las Bela¹⁶² supported Bizenjo against the 'Government' Convention Muslim League candidate, Piracha. Bizenjo won overwhelmingly.¹⁶³ (Yusuf Haroon would later tell me that many of the BD member votes had been purchased for sums ranging between Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2000). Ayub Khan's revenge was swift. Within a week both

¹⁶¹ In a conversation with Yusuf Haroon.

¹⁶² After the set up of One Unit, Las Bela became part of Karachi.

¹⁶³ The by-elections results were as follows: Ghous Buksh Bizenjo: 348 votes Hafiz Habibullah Piracha: 125 votes Major Ashfaq Qureshi: 4 votes.

Mahmood Haroon and Jam Ghulam Qadir of Las Bela were dismissed from the West Pakistan Council of Ministers. Ayub Khan was infuriated by the fact that the president's candidate had met defeat at the hands of the governor's candidate. By September 1966 Kalabagh was made to leave his office and was replaced by the loyal General Musa.

Ayub Khan had surrounded himself with a coterie of *durbaris* for whom he could do no wrong. They would constantly eulogize him in his presence. It has been suggested that Ayub Khan's humble birth gave him an in-built sense of inadequacy. This, it is maintained, led Ayub Khan to feed upon gratuitous praises and develop a conceit which knew few bounds. However it is a fact that his ego grew to such an extent that in 1965, at a committee meeting of the Muslim League, Ayub Khan boldly stated that during the past fifty years the Muslims had not seen a leader greater than him.¹⁶⁴ Surrounded by deferential officials like Altaf Gauhar¹⁶⁵ and Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi¹⁶⁶ he was largely, kept cocooned from the true state of affairs. Not surprisingly, Ayub Khan was shocked to learn, when a man tried to assassinate him at a public meeting, that people were actually unhappy with his rule. The attempted assassination only took place four months before his actual overthrow. Remarkably, until then he had been led to believe by his advisers that the people, with the exception of a handful of political leaders, all supported him.¹⁶⁷ It had by then become a habit of his administration to ignore unpleasant realities - by not reporting them or by discouraging or suppressing all reports of them and creating an illusion of their non-existence. Having become divorced from reality, he committed such outlandish acts as the one conferring the title of 'His Highness' upon the Wali of Swat - who happened to be his daughter's father-in-law. Conferring of regal titles was hardly the preserve of a president of a republic. With no one having the courage to correct him, Ayub Khan's prejudices had also come to the fore. His bias against politicians made him willingly adopt methods more repressive than any of his predecessors. The fact that open criticism of his regime would often land people in jail - and on occasion even be subject to assassination - seemed to mean little to him.¹⁶⁸ In the end none of his prejudices

¹⁶⁴ Fazalul Qader Choudhry (then a prominent minister in Ayub Khan's Cabinet) stated in *Urdu Digest*, June 1969 (cited in: Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 279).

¹⁶⁵ Altaf Gauhar was one of the main architects of building a personality cult around Ayub Khan. He also was the ghost-writer for Ayub Khan's memoirs. Herbert Feldman states, 'That Altaf Gauhar served Ayub Khan faithfully and, often, well cannot be denied, but the value of his services was marred by his love of power, his unbounded ambition and the tremendous self-confidence based upon his rapid advancement...' (See, Herbert Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis*, *op. cit.*, p. 303).

¹⁶⁶ When other courtiers suggested that Ayub Khan make himself president for life, Pir Muhammad Ali Rashidi is known to have taken it one step further by fawningly telling him that he should commence a hereditary reign as the first *Badshah* of Pakistan.

¹⁶⁷ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

¹⁶⁸ In January 1965 Zamir Qureshi was shot to death by assassins evidently aiming at someone else. Qureshi had been leaving Ghulam Jilani's house, accompanied by Baqi Baluch. Both Jilani and Baluch were deeply involved in opposition activities. It was generally believed that one of the two men was the intended victim and that the act had been commissioned by Governor Kalabagh himself.

served him, and none more so than his entrenched belief that the Bengalis were 'inferior' to the so-called 'martial races' of West Pakistan.

* * *

The East Pakistanis had several grievances. Some were of a political nature, others were largely economic. Ayub Khan's dictatorship had deprived them of the opportunity to have a share in the decision-making process. By curbing the power of Parliament and by rendering the Cabinet ineffective, the regime had denied the Bengalis their right to participate in national affairs. On the economic front, the principal foreign exchange earner for the country since 1947 had always been East Pakistan, and the East Pakistanis believed that most of the benefits from it had gone to the western wing. In the public services there was a clear case of under-recruitment in East Pakistan. In 1966, of a total of 5048 gazetted officers, only 1338 came from the east, and of a total of 109,254 non-gazetted officers, only 26,310 had been recruited from there. Bureaucrats and even government officials behaved like the colonials. In the armed forces Ayub Khan's malevolent dictum on martial races and non-martial races had been closely followed. Other complaints were more broad in nature and related to what was perceived as a policy of general subjugation of the Bengali language and culture by the western wing. During an opposition gathering at Chaudhry Muhammad Ali's house in February 1966 called to provide a unified front against the Tashkent Declaration, Mujibur Rahman produced the early version of his famous Six Points. In brief the Six Points demanded:

1. A federal Constitution for Pakistan.
2. The Central Government to be limited to Defence and Foreign Affairs only.
3. The two provinces to have separate currencies (or restrictions be placed on the movement of capital funds from one province to another).
4. All taxes collected belonged to the province of collection.
5. All foreign exchange earned by East Pakistan to remain there.
6. East Pakistan to have the right to form its own militia.

The Six Points soon captured the Bengali public's imagination. A few months later, in early April 1966, Mujib demanded a national referendum on his Six Point issue. This was followed by intense campaign deriding the government for plundering the eastern wing. By the time Mujib was arrested a few days later on 27 April, his movement had gathered general public acclamation in the eastern province. Later Mujib and a number

of his supporters were implicated in the 'Agartala Conspiracy' case¹⁶⁹ which would serve to further aggravate the general feeling of discontent in the eastern wing.

In West Pakistan there was a great deal of public disillusionment following the signing of the Tashkent Declaration, particularly so among students and the generally India-phobic Punjab.¹⁷⁰ The public having been raised to their emotional peak during the war, felt let down by the Declaration. Strong anti-government demonstrations took place in a number of major cities and Ayub Khan's image as a strongman was considerably tarnished. In an effort to rehabilitate the regime, 'The Great Decade of Development and Reform' was launched on 25 October 1967 by the Ministry of Information, on television, radio and the printed Press. The main theme of this year-long propaganda campaign was the constant glowing tributes accorded to the 'personality and genius' of the President. The central figure behind this deliberate cult of Ayub Khan's personality was none other than the wartime propagandist and Secretary for Information, Altaf Gauhar.

As the year wore on, it appeared that the only people who believed in this massive publicity drive were Ayub Khan and his campaigners. Among other things the constant appearances of newspaper supplements on the successes of the regime, which were financed mostly by compulsory advertising, led to growing disbelief and boredom. No one read them.¹⁷¹ The regime did not realize the true depth of public discontent. The General had been in power for nearly nine years. Longevity of power in the natural course of things eventually breeds public discontentment and desire for change. By this time the people had had enough of Ayub Khan. He was now perceived as a man who hungered for power and wished to retain it;¹⁷² as man whose claim to integrity had been corroded by the strong taint of corruption in his administration, as well as among his close family members; and as a man who had promised an economic miracle which he, even after eight years in power, had failed to deliver.¹⁷³ Ironically, as if to emphasize

¹⁶⁹ On 7 January 1968. 28 persons were arrested in East Pakistan-they included officers and men of the armed forces and three members of the CSP - and were charged with plotting to overthrow the government in East Pakistan and with the intention of making a separate and independent state. It was claimed that several of the alleged conspirator had visited Agartala in India, where with Indian help, the plan had been formulated. A few days later it was announced that Mujib would stand trial along with those already under arrest.

¹⁷⁰ Punjab, particularly the eastern part, had endured untold suffering a time of Partition, and the memories remained fresh.

¹⁷¹ Now thirty years later the message still does not seem to have sunk. The hapless public is still subjected to these type of supplements on a regular basis. The hidebound nature of our bureaucracy and the egotism of our leaders, who are deluded into thinking that they are being praised ensures their continuance. The fact remains that even today no one bothers to read them.

¹⁷² The State of Emergency which had been declared in the country on commencement of the 1965 War remained in place, providing Ayub Khan with a strong legalized arsenal of power-The Defence of Pakistan, under which hundreds of dissidents came to be jailed. The 'Emergency' was withdrawn as late as 17 February 1968, barely over a month before Ayub Khan's political demise.

¹⁷³ 'Pakistan's Second Five Year Plan (1960-1965), the one that covered a good part of the Martial Law period, was a substantial success from the statistical point of view. But there was little overall improvement in the life-style of

the last point of public criticism, within a day or two after the end of the 'Great Decade' campaign, in November 1968, sugar rationing was introduced throughout West Pakistan.

The spark that led to the great urban unrest took place in Rawalpindi. In early November 1968 the city police had seized some goods from students who were returning from the NWFP smugglers' haunt at Landi Kotal. This provided a pretext for students to call for a demonstration. Their main cause of complaint was the Ayub Khan established university ordinance that prescribed severe penalties - such as the confiscation of university degrees - against students who indulged in politics. The student demonstration on 9 November led to a police confrontation, and one of the students was killed. This resulted in more violence. The government was further unnerved when a few days later an assailant opened fire on Ayub Khan at Peshawar on 11 November. Within two days a number of leading opposition politicians were arrested, including Wali Khan and Bhutto.

These arrests of the politicians led to demonstrations in a number of NWFP and Punjab towns and cities. The demonstrating students, who had originally been protesting against the university ordinances and calling for changes in the educational system, now launched into the political sphere. They began clamoring for the revival of civil rights, restoration of parliamentary institutions, and release of political prisoners. The killing of one student by the police in one town would lead to several successive demonstrations in other towns. These further confrontations would only lead to more killings thereby adding to the worsening situation. By early December, Ayub Khan repealed the hated university ordinance, but it was already too late. From 9 November 1968 to 25 March of the following year, not a day passed in Pakistan without some kind of civil disturbance, riot, strike, bloodshed, or demonstration. In the first week of December Ayub Khan chose to visit Dhaka for a short stay. His arrival generated violent anti-government demonstrations in the city, and on the very first day of his visit two protesters were killed. Within a matter of .days the whole of East Pakistan was in the grip of intense student agitation.

At this stage mention should be made of the politicians and their part in Ayub Khan's downfall. A significant, date for Mumtaz Daultana and other 'ebdoed' politicians was 31 December 1966, when the period of their ban from holding political office came to an end. A large number of them attempted to capitalize on the anti-Ayub Khan feeling that had become widespread among the public as a result of the Tashkent Declaration, but they, in the end, had only a limited role to play in the eventual overthrow of the president. The key players in the downfall of Ayub Khan were Air Marshal Asghar

the general population.' Professor Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development*, Dawson Westview, 1980, p. 92.

Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and senior members of his former constituency - the army generals.

After his return to Pakistan in October 1966, Bhutto maintained a low profile as he sought to get back into politics. As his whole political life, since becoming the Minister for Commerce in Iskander Mirza's government, had been linked to the government, it was a difficult and uncertain period for him. At first he attempted to join the Council Muslim League, offering himself for the position of secretary-general of the party, but Daultana rejected him. It was then that he decided to form a party of his own. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was formed on 1 December 1967. The case for the party being formed on a Socialist platform was enunciated in a set of guiding principles written jointly by J. A. Rahim, an intelligent man with strong socialist views, and Dr. Mubashir Hassan. The party manifesto was largely the handiwork of J. A. Rahim himself. The original nucleus of the party consisted of J. A. Rahim, Dr. Mubashir Hassan, Mairaj Muhammad Khan, Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Muhammad Hayat Sherpao, and Bhutto's cousin, Mumtaz. I should state at this stage that, despite exhortations to the contrary, Bhutto had never shown any leanings towards socialism. Initially Bhutto was concerned that no party espousing socialism had met with success in Pakistan and was reluctant to pursue this brand of philosophy.¹⁷⁴ His struggle as far as he was concerned, was based not on any brand of ideology, but a relentless pursuit to get even with his ex-mentor, Ayub Khan. It is only when he was convinced by the likes of J. A. Rahim that the timing was right for socialism to appeal in Pakistan, that he saw the viability of using this creed as a vehicle to power.

Bhutto made his first speech as Chairman of PPP at Mochi Gate in Lahore. He wanted to capitalize on his popularity in the Punjab and tap the public's growing resentment of Ayub Khan. In his speeches, to win public popularity, Bhutto used a four faceted campaign; the first was an attack on the personality of Ayub Khan and the corruption scandals surrounding his family and his government; the second and vital assault was based upon the Tashkent Declaration and the so-called 'great betrayal' that stemmed from it; the third part was fierce anti-India rhetoric to gain favor in Lahore and the populous central Punjab; the last was anti-US in nature, to take advantage of public hostility which had resulted from the US arms embargo during the 1965 War and after. When the anti-government student riots started in November 1968 they were skillfully supported by Bhutto. Coincidentally, he happened to be present at Rawalpindi on the day they began and the next day he took the opportunity to visit the family to offer condolences. Within a day or two he was back at Lahore exhorting the people onwards against the dictatorship he had been a part of for nearly eight of its nine years. Faced with the onslaught of daily student rioting the government, fearing that Bhutto would only work towards further inciting the students, decided to detain him. On 12 November Bhutto was arrested under the Defence of Pakistan Rules and charged with

¹⁷⁴ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

inciting 'hatred and contempt' in his speeches against the government. Wali Khan and a number of other politicians were also arrested on the same day.

On 17 November Air Marshal Asghar Khan proclaimed that he would actively enter the campaign against Ayub Khan. He charged the general's regime with corruption and administrative incompetence, and condemned the suppression of Press and the freedom of speech. With Asghar Khan - a military figure - in the field, the movement against Ayub Khan took further courage and other groups quickly swelled the ranks of the agitating students. The Air Marshal took a nation-wide tour to mobilize public opinion. In East Pakistan he was warmly received and met with cries of 'Down with Ayub!' By mid-January the street violence had further intensified. The large number of student deaths in Dhaka led to a general strike in the city. Angry young people dominated the streets in Dhaka, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Khulna and elsewhere. The mobs soon turned on Ayub Khan's supporters in the Convention Muslim League, and a number of the party's workers were killed. While no accurate estimate of the total death toll was given, the estimated toll ran in hundreds.. Finally by mid-January the Army was called in to control the areas of severe disturbance.

The Democratic Alliance Committee (DAC) - which consisted of such parties as Maulana Maudoodi's Jamaat-i-Islami, Mufti Mahmood's Jamiat-ul-Islam, Wali Khan's National Awami Party, Nurul Amin's National Democratic Front, Daultana's Council Muslim League, Mujibur Rahman's Awami League and Awami League (Nawabzada Nasrullah group) - had been formed in January 1969. Faced with the competing egos of the senior politicians, a tactful solution was found by giving the chairmanship of the DAC to the relatively untested Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan.¹⁷⁵ In the absence of the jailed Mujib, Bhutto and Wali Khan, this committee had the political field - with the sole exception of the boycotting Maulana Bashani - all to itself. On 5 February, the desperately placed Ayub Khan invited the Opposition parties for talks. The DAC agreed to meet with him provided he withdrew the State of Emergency (and its Defence of Pakistan Rules which had been imposed since the 1965 War), release all detained politicians and students protesters and lift the ban on public meetings and processions. The government met these conditions and the talks that are now known as the 'Round Table Conference' were re-scheduled from 17 to 19 February. All the jailed politicians were released.

Soon after being released, Bhutto decided to boycott the Round Table Conference. At the time suspicions were raised, but now it has been confirmed that Bhutto was prompted to reject these talks at the behest of General Peerzada. Rafi Raza reveals in his book that Bhutto had entered into a secret understanding with the senior generals

¹⁷⁵ Interestingly, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan's politics during the pre-Partition era began with the Ahrars. In those days the Ahrars were known to be pro-Congress and anti-Muslim League. Then he left the Majlis-i-Ahrar and was elected in 1951 as a Muslim League candidate to the Punjab Assembly. He contested the 1955 elections but was unsuccessful from his home seat at Muzaffargarh. In the 1950s Nasrulla Khan joined Suhrawardy's Awami League.

which was referred to by a mutual code designated as the 'Ceylon Tea Party'.¹⁷⁶ In the end Bhutto's boycott proved of little consequence as the talks failed for reasons of their own. But the inescapable fact remains that senior generals had already commenced their political maneuvering. And Bhutto, who during his days of political wilderness was always concentrating on retaining the confidence of the Army, was ever ready to oblige them.

Despite freeing Bhutto, Wali Khan, and other politicians as promised, the regime had refused to release Mujib and the other alleged conspirators in the Agartala case. This now led to another crisis. Awami League, which by now largely controlled the situation in East Pakistan, refused to attend the talks until these people were released. Initially, the government offered to release them on parole, but on facing adamant opposition backed down completely. Mujib and the thirty-four co-accused were set free unconditionally. But already greater damage had been done. A few days earlier on 15 February one of the Agartala accused, Flight Sergeant Zahurul Haq, was shot dead supposedly during an attempt to escape from custody. This triggered off very severe riots in Dhaka - two central ministers' houses were set on fire and the arriving fire fighting machines and police jeeps were destroyed by the mob. Later the State Guest House and the offices of Convention Muslim League were also burnt down.

In order to facilitate the Round Table Talks, Ayub Khan announced that he would not seek re-election in the election scheduled for 1970, The talks commenced on 26 February, and consisted of a brief session and included Ayub Khan and three of his ministers, leaders of the DAC, Mujib and Asghar Khan. A clear consensus emerged on the need for a parliamentary system of government and direct elections through universal adult suffrage. The second session was scheduled for 10 March. By now the different views held by the various opposition parties had come to the surface and some had begun squabbling with each other. Many of the leaders participating in the RTC were without any popular base. Events were moving fast and soon by-passed them altogether. In a last desperate attempt, Ayub Khan tried to hold secret talks with Mujib but these met with failure. It is felt that Mujib was worried that these talks might jeopardize his image at home, but it has also been a suggested view that senior generals had tempted Mujib with the prospect of getting elected to power in the near future as opposed to getting there through the 'back-door' via Ayub Khan.¹⁷⁷

By March the situation had deteriorated even further as labor power had now begun to assert itself in the urban areas. On 4 March 5000 workers at the Valika mills went on strike, later setting the textile mill on fire. In Punjab mill workers attempted to burn the Saigol family's Kohinoor textile mill. On 6 March the clerical staff at the National Bank of Pakistan's head office *gheraoed* the bank and confined the bank's president and

¹⁷⁶ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

¹⁷⁷ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

managing director to their offices. In the eastern wing the Adamjee Jute Mill and Pakistan Tobacco Company's factory were both *gheraoed* and the management of both were forced to accept the workers' demands. Strikes and *gheraos* were multiplying rapidly and this was having a serious impact on the country's economy.

The penultimate blow to the regime was Mujib's decision to withdraw from the second session of the talks. This led to a strike call from the All-Pakistan Students Action Committee which at Dhaka halted all train services and government work in the eastern wing. A reign of terror was unleashed. Police stations were attacked and officials were clubbed to death. A large number of BD members were forced to resign, and others were slaughtered in cold blood, some being burnt to death. Executive authority ceased to exist and anarchy prevailed. The Governor, Monem Khan, faced with a situation totally beyond his control, fled to the security of Islamabad along with his family members. As a final desperate attempt, on 19 March Ayub Khan appointed Dr. N. M. Huda and Yusuf Haroon as the new governors of East and West Pakistan. Theirs proved to be the shortest governorships in the country's history - they were to last in their offices for no more than a week.

The final blow to Ayub Khan came from his own constituency, the Army. By March 1969 he had largely lost the confidence of his armed forces. The President, disoriented by a world created by his courtiers, seemed oblivious to the fact that he had damaged his standing within the Army as a result of the Tashkent Declaration, and that the resentment within the officers and ranks had continued to fester. In 1966 he had moved the loyal General Musa Khan from the Army, making him the Governor of West Pakistan. He replaced him as Commander-in-Chief with General Yahya Khan, by-passing a number of more senior generals. It is believed that Yahya Khan was chosen largely for his non-political and non-serious nature, in the hope that he would be content with convivial and suitably alcoholic social evenings. Yahya Khan's long-standing friendship with General Peerzada was clearly overlooked. It has been suggested that it was Peerzada's personal ambitions and his influence on the new Commander-in-Chief that led Yahya Khan to detach himself from the 'Supreme Commander' and assert his own independent position.¹⁷⁸ At the height of the unrest Ayub Khan's request for the imposition of limited Martial Law in the key cities of disturbance was flatly rejected by General Yahya Khan. According to one commentator, Yahya Khan had by now become convinced by his colleagues that by providing unqualified support to the beleaguered President, he might relinquish his own opportunity to exercise supreme power.¹⁷⁹ Yahya Khan and his generals had already begun to enter into political conspiracies with the likes of Bhutto and, as has been

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁹ Hasan Askari Rizvi. *op. cit.*, p. 164.

suggested by some, Mujib, to prevent the possibility of any consensus emerging between Ayub Khan and the opposition leadership.¹⁸⁰

The President now faced a situation bordering on total anarchy, which had clearly gone beyond the power of civilian authorities. It had exposed the unreality of his attempt to create political stability through bureaucratic discipline. His claimed desire to prepare people for a democratic life through Basic Democracy proved to be a total failure, largely because of the oppressive methods he had adopted to further his own rule. Even his planned economic development had kindled hatred for him and the public had come to resent the rapid accumulation of enormous wealth by a handful of families. The beginning of his eventual collapse started with the rigging of the 1965 presidential elections. The 1965 War and the Tashkent Declaration served to add fuel to the growing disillusionment. Charges of corruption and nepotism blackened his reputation. On 25 March the beleaguered President - after eighteen years of being in power, first as a forceful Commander-in-Chief of the Army, then as a dictator - finally decided to throw in the towel, and in complete contravention of his 1962 Constitution, he handed over power to General Yahya Khan and the armed forces.

* * *

It was during this tumultuous period of Ayub Khan's fall that I first became involved with an individual political party (as opposed to Miss Jinnah's combined opposition grouping of 1965) for the first time. I use the word involved, because as I will explain, I did not become a member of any party until much later.

On 9 February 1967 I was approached by Bhutto to participate in the founding of a political party that he was then proposing to create. It took ten more months for the Pakistan People's Party to come into existence, but I stayed away from it. Again, at a dinner hosted by M. A. H. Ispahani on 13 March 1969, only twelve days before Ayub Khan's resignation, I was once more approached by Bhutto who had been released from jail only days before. On this occasion Bhutto was extremely exuberant. It was apparent to all by then that Ayub Khan's days in power were numbered. Bhutto was clearly overjoyed at the prospect of his former mentor fast approaching his nemesis. Having proclaimed to me that his party represented the political force of the future, he was now insistent that he needed me by his side. Once more I politely shrugged his offer off. I had known Bhutto since 1954 and though we had maintained a friendship, I would not venture to say that I had learnt to trust him.

¹⁸⁰ 'It has been confirmed that Mujib had secret meetings with Yahya Khan during the RTC days, and was assured by the latter that Martial Law would not be imposed. Mujib was trapped. When Martial Law was imposed after Ayub's resignation, Mujib repented for having contribute towards the failure of the Round Table Conference'; Safdar Mahmood. *Pakistan Divided*, Ferozsons, Lahore, 1984, p. 53.

Undeniably, he had provided valuable help in getting my friend Akbar Bugti out of jail. Bhutto had possessed some redeeming qualities, but it had become evident by then that he was now a man driven by naked ambition alone and his positive qualities were in recession. In his avid pursuit of power, basic concepts such as truth, loyalty and integrity had become largely foreign to his nature. The idea of joining a party led by him was not a conceivable option for me.

By November 1968 another figure had made his appearance in the national political scene. I had known Air Marshal Asghar Khan since the late 1950s when he had been the Air Force Chief based at Karachi. My wife and I would often meet the Air Marshal and his charming wife, Amina, at social gatherings in Karachi. Souriya and I had held a dinner for them in 1959. Asghar Khan can quite rightly take the credit of having built the Pakistan Air Force. Despite his retirement just months before the 1965 War, he emerged as a war hero. During the sixteen days of war, the Air Force had been more than capably led by Air Marshal Nur Khan, but its remarkable performance at war were also seen by the public as a vindication of the years of Asghar Khan's leadership. His subsequent years as chairman of PIA kept him prominent in the public eye. When he retired from the airline in mid-1968, people encouraged him to enter politics. Even at the numerous farewell dinners and lunches that were given on his retirement from PIA, he would regularly be cornered by guests imploring him to emerge as an alternate to Ayub Khan.

As the political opposition to Ayub Khan gained momentum and the street rioting commenced, Asghar Khan was finally compelled to show his hand and publicly proclaim his entry into the political field in November 1968. My personal antagonism to the Ayub Khan regime had continued unabated, despite the fact that my brother Mir Balakh Sher, much to my dismay, had returned to the fold of the Convention Muslim League in July 1967. I had kept my own counsel and had opted to strike an independent course. I welcomed Asghar Khan's move. Having known him for a number of years, I was certain of his honesty and integrity. I believed that the Air Marshal, unlike Bhutto, was a man who could be relied upon.

In January 1969 Asghar Khan arrived at Karachi and met with a rousing reception at the airport. On 26 January I was invited to attend a meeting held at the house of his brother Anwar Khan. The purpose of this select gathering was to give Asghar Khan an opportunity to consult people before announcing the launch of his party. A few days later he asked me to accompany his party on a tour of lower Sindh which was planned for 31 January. The trip proved to be a great success. The *muhajirs* of the urban areas of Hyderabad, Thatta and Mirpur Khas accorded the Air Marshal the warmest of welcomes. It was the same in the rural areas, but the cries of '*Jiye Bhutto*' were noticeably prevalent. In the first week of February, I along with a number of people from various political parties, accompanied the Air Marshal in defying the Section 144 which had been imposed in Karachi. The procession started from Liaquatabad and was

supported very enthusiastically all along the way. Later in February general amnesty was declared and the remaining detained Baloch leaders were released from jail and were restored full privileges by the government. Attaullah Mengal, Akbar Bugti, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo, Gul Khan Naseer and others were very keen to meet with Asghar Khan, and approached me to arrange a meeting for them. I introduced them to the Air Marshal and they held a series of discussions with him. At the time everyone was trying to anticipate the changed nature of national politics as Ayub Khan had very recently announced that he would not stand for the next presidential elections. Political alignments were very much on their minds as politicians contemplated the impending post-Ayub phase in Pakistan. Sometime later, largely as a result of Ghous Buksh Bizenjo's persuasions, the Baloch leadership opted to join the National Awami Party led by Khan Abdul Wali Khan.

On 23 March 1969 the inaugural convention of Air Marshal Asghar Khan's Justice Party was held at my new house in Karachi's Defence Housing Society. The party manifesto and the office-holders were announced. Despite my by now close affiliation with Asghar Khan I was the only one present at the convention who did not apply for party membership that day. In fact I never joined the Justice Party at any stage of its brief existence. The reasons for this were personal. I had always held an independent stance in my politics to date. Even in Dera Ghazi Khan I had never bothered to be confined to the dictates of the so-called Mazari group or even the consensus decisions of my family members. To join a party meant accepting party discipline, which though was not necessarily anathema to me, I had to be sure that I agreed with all its general philosophy. Joining a political party was a deep and abiding commitment and I wanted time to think it over. While I held Asghar Khan in deep respect as an individual, I was as yet unsure how he would shape up as a political leader. Despite my admiration for the man I had noticed a trait in him which I found disconcerting: perhaps due to his military background the Air Marshal would often take decisions without consulting others. Inexperienced as he was in the murky field of politics, I was not sure if it would augur well for the future.

CHAPTER 4

The 1970 Elections and their Tragic Aftermath

The renewal of martial law on the resignation of Ayub Khan was greeted with relief. After months of violent agitation, an eerie calm descended upon the country as armed troops in battledress began patrolling the streets once again. Despite its superficial similarity with the martial law of 1958, the situation was entirely different. When Ayub Khan had ascended to power, the existing political system had been undermined and its politicians had become generally reviled by the public. The prevailing circumstances had allowed Ayub Khan a free opportunity to dominate and mould his individual grip on the affairs of the nation. Yahya was given no such opening. Ironically, Yahya had assumed power as a military dictator at a time when the public had expressed seething resentment towards authoritarian rule. The people desired democracy, and Yahya, as the new Chief Martial Law Administrator, was in no position to confront them. In his first radio address to the nation on 26 March 1969 he declared:

I have no ambitions other than the creation of conditions conducive to the establishment of constitutional government. It is my firm belief that a sound, clean and honest administration is a prerequisite for sane and constructive political life and for the smooth transfer of power to the representatives of the people elected freely and impartially on the basis of adult franchise. It will be the task of these elected representatives to give the country a workable Constitution and final solution to all other political, economic and social problems that have been agitating the minds of the people.¹⁸¹

On 1 April 1969 Yahya officially assumed the office of President. Along with being the Head of State, he now also held the offices of Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). General Peerzada was appointed as the Principal Staff Officer (PSO) to the CMLA and would soon be referred to in the Sunday Times as the de facto Prime Minister.¹⁸² Under the PSO were two brigadiers (later promoted to major-generals), one placed in charge of martial law affairs, and the other given control of civil affairs. G. W. Choudhury, who was a member of the Yahya government, describes these two officers as being 'super secretaries' and adds that, 'It was an amusing phenomenon to see top bureaucrats waiting in the corridors of the brigadiers and then at the office of the all-powerful PSO; very rarely did they have occasion to see the President himself'.¹⁸³ It was the first time in the history of Pakistan

¹⁸¹ The text of Yahya Khan's broadcast of 26 March 1969 was published the next day in *Dawn*, 27 March 1969.

¹⁸² Hamid Yusuf, *Pakistan in Search of Democracy, 1947-77*, op. cit., p. 99.

¹⁸³ G. W. Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 50.

that the civil service had been relegated to playing such a subservient role. Clearly, the regime desired to have no partnership with the bureaucracy. Peerzada is reported to have said, 'We took the blame last time when everything was done by civilians. This time we will do everything and take the credit too'.¹⁸⁴

Not surprisingly, the new regime was solidly based on senior armed forces personnel. The various ministries were soon divided up among the senior army men, and the chiefs of the air force and navy. The generals who mattered, other than Peerzada, were Hamid Khan, Umar, Mitha, and the Director of Military Intelligence, Akbar. It would take another four months before the regime chose to allow civilians to become government ministers.

At this juncture it would be pertinent to state that, unlike his predecessor Ayub Khan, Yahya was not the total master of the armed forces. It would probably be more correct to describe him as the head of an army junta. Either he did not feel it necessary, or he was not quite able to assert his dominance over other senior military officers. In the months that followed, a number of the generals such as Peerzada, Hamid and Umar began following their own secret private agendas with their own chosen set of political leaders. In the disastrous aftermath that led to the end of the military regime, many questions were left without complete answers. Who among the army junta were responsible for the tragic consequences that left a shattered country? The safest and possibly the most accurate answer can only be: all of them. Faced with an explosive political situation in East Pakistan, through their gross ineptitude, their ambitious political scheming and their inherent intellectual mediocrity, they proved incapable of dealing with the crisis.

Soon after assuming power, Yahya entered into discussions with the political leaders of the country. His most important talks were of course with Mujib, as he represented the Bengalis who now constituted the alienated majority of the country. The crucial issue was whether Mujib would modify his Six Points which had given rise to many misgivings in West Pakistan, not the least among leading members of junta. After a series of regular meetings in October 1969 according to G. W Choudhury, who accompanied the President to Dhaka, Mujib told Yahya that his Six Points were not the 'Koran or the Bible' and were negotiable.¹⁸⁵ Satisfied with his accomplishment, Yahya is said to have returned to West Pakistan. Choudhury maintains that Yahya believed in Mujib's word and would regularly dismiss all evidence to the contrary by saying that political pressures prevented Mujib from prematurely disclosing his commitment. According to Choudhury, it was only after his post-election meeting with Mujib in the beginning of 1971 that Yahya felt he had been totally betrayed.

¹⁸⁴ Fazal Muqeem Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership*, National Book Foundation, Karachi, 1973, p. 19.

¹⁸⁵ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

In November 1969 Yahya announced two major changes in the coming political system. These changes he stated were a direct result of his meetings with the political leaders. The first was the proposed dissolution of the One Unit in West Pakistan. The other major announcement was the regime's commitment to the principle of 'one-man-one-vote', which signaled the end of the long-standing system of political parity between the two wings. The larger population of East Pakistan would ensure that the eastern province would now have a majority representation in the future Constituent Assembly, something the Bengalis had been denied ever since the promulgation of the 1956 Constitution. Yahya seemed to have realized that the Bengalis could no longer be deprived of their democratic right and probably hoped that by conceding majority representation to the eastern wing he would pacify its political leadership. Other explanations have also been offered for this decision. It has been often suggested that the army junta believed that the elections would see the emergence of a large number of political parties in the Assembly. No party would have a commanding majority, thereby leaving the initiative in the hands of the president and the emergence of coalition governments. This view presupposes that the junta did not receive accurate intelligence reports from the eastern province, or if they did,¹⁸⁶ they were dim-witted enough to ignore the reality of the political situation as it existed there.

Having taken these two major decisions, Yahya and the army junta issued the Legal Framework Order (LFO) on 30 March 1970. The LFO included the following points:

1. A National Assembly of 313 members of which 54 percent or 169 members were allocated to East Pakistan.
2. An elected Member could only resign after the Assembly had met, by a notice in writing to the Speaker.
3. The Assembly had a set period of 120 days to frame a new Constitution or else it would be dissolved.
4. That under the new Constitution:
 - a) 'Pakistan shall be so united in a Federation that the independence, the territorial integrity and the national solidarity of Pakistan are ensured and the unity of the Federation is not in any way impaired.'
 - b) 'All powers including legislative, administrative and financial shall be so distributed between the Federal Government and the

¹⁸⁶ In fact the military intelligence report prepared by General Akbar Khan predicted Mujib's total victory in East Pakistan: G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

Provinces that the Provinces shall have maximum autonomy, that is to say maximum legislative, administrative and financial powers but the Federal Government shall also have adequate powers to discharge its responsibilities in relation to external and internal affairs and to preserve the independence and territorial integrity of the country.¹⁸⁷

- c) 'Within a specified period economic and all other disparities between the Provinces and between different areas in a Province are removed by the adoption of statutory and other measures.'¹⁸⁸

The constitutional stipulations in the LFO were a clear attempt to both appease Mujib as well to serve as a curb against his Six Points. However, it contained some glaring contradictions and omissions. Most importantly, the LFO did not stipulate the majority required for the passing of the new Constitution. If a two-third majority - as was usual in such circumstances - had been specified, it would have ensured the consensus and participation of elected Members from both wings. Instead, in his broadcast announcing the LFO, Yahya Khan stated that 'the voting procedure evolved by the Assembly for itself should be just and fair to all regions of Pakistan', thus leaving the door open to simple majority voting in passing the new Constitution. It was a major blunder on Yahya Khan's part and would have the most disastrous repercussions.

A chronicler of the events at the time questioned whether this deliberate omission meant that 'the matter of voting procedure was left to the decision of the Assembly as a favour, or whether it was left to the Assembly out of sheer mischief in the belief that most of the 120 days allowed would be consumed in arguing over this very topic'.¹⁸⁹ In fact, G. W. Choudhury, then a member of the Cabinet, later revealed that other members of the junta had insisted in the 'inner' Cabinet meeting that a sixty percent vote in the Assembly be made a requirement in the passing of the new Constitution. It was Yahya Khan who 'at the eleventh hour, by most skilful maneuvering' had the clause dropped from the LFO. Choudhury continues by stating that 'Mujib did not want this issue decided by Yahya but left to the legislature, in which there would be a clear Bengali majority. On this vital issue too, Yahya complied with Mujib's wishes and as a result was criticized, by the West Pakistani leaders.'¹⁹⁰ Other members of the junta were not altogether pleased by what they perceived was a 'soft' policy towards Mujib. Hawks like General Hamid and his close ally General Umar were said to be angered, but Peerzada who disliked his colleagues, chose to adopt a neutral posture.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Legal Framework Order-Section 20(4), 30 March 1970.

¹⁸⁸ Legal Framework Order-Section 20(5)(ii), 30 March 1970.

¹⁸⁹ Herbert Feldman, *The End and the Beginning*, Reprinted by Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1976. p. 67.

¹⁹⁰ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

¹⁹¹ General Gul Hassan, who was then the Chief of General Staff, mentions that the recently promoted Chief of Army Staff, General Hamid, and the Principal Staff Officer, General Peerzada, loathed each other heartily' and

At this stage it becomes critically evident that Yahya Khan had placed near total reliance on Mujib's commitment to negotiate the Six Points. If one goes by reports that were published subsequently, a clearer picture emerges. The official government account conclusively states that in their meetings Mujib always conveyed the impression that the Six Points were negotiable and necessary adjustments were possible.¹⁹² This view is further corroborated by the close participant G. W. Choudhury who states that 'I carefully examined the substance of the Yahya-Mujib and Mujib-Ahsan [then Governor of East Pakistan] talks in 1969-70 and can vouch that Mujib repeatedly assured that he would modify his six points once the elections were over.'¹⁹³ Faced with such evidence it would be difficult to doubt the sincerity of purpose with which Yahya Khan tried to deal with the crisis looming in East Pakistan. Some of his decisions may have been extremely questionable but it seems plain that he was genuine in his desire to solve the East Pakistan crisis, as well as committed to handing over power at the coming elections. It seems obvious though that while Yahya and the junta were expecting a sizeable electoral victory for the Awami League in East Pakistan, no one could have possibly envisaged the magnitude with which the party would sweep virtually all the National Assembly seats from the east wing into its own hands.

* * *

During this period of political upheaval and the re-imposition of Martial Law in the country, I had continued my personal association with Air Marshal Asghar Khan. By now he had got together a dedicated group of capable men around him. Not long after forming his Justice Party Asghar Khan decided to amalgamate it with Chaudhry Muhammad Ali's Nizam-i-Islam Party, Nurul Amin's National Democratic Front and Nawabzada Nasrullah's 'two-man' fragment of the Awami League, and form the Pakistan Democratic Party (POP). This abrupt step took most of his supporters by complete surprise as he had not consulted many people when making this decision. This unexpected news caused a certain amount of distress and disillusionment among his supporters. Nevertheless, as my relationship with Asghar Khan still remained more personal rather than political, I continued my association with him.

In late July 1969 Asghar Khan visited the Mazari tribal area. He first arrived at Sonmiani, then I took him to Kashmor and from there onwards to Rojhan. Due to hill torrents the road between Kashmor and Rojhan had been cut off. Upon reaching Shahwali I had arranged for us to be met by a large party of horsemen who then accompanied us as we crossed the flooded route on horseback. It made for quite a

'were at loggerheads with each other': (Lieut.-General Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs*, p. 269 and p. 256). These fissures within the junta, in my opinion, could only have complicated matters further at this decisive juncture in our history.

¹⁹² *White Paper on the Crisis in East Pakistan*, Government of Pakistan Islamabad, 5 August 1971, p. 10.

¹⁹³ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

colorful scene and is still remembered by some of the visitors who had accompanied Asghar Khan on that trip. At Rojhan, the Air Marshal addressed six thousand people, a remarkably large gathering for a town the size of Rojhan. After spending the night at Rojhan, I took my guests northwards stopping at the towns of Rajanpur, Mithankot, Fazilpur, Muhammadpur and Jampur where Asghar Khan opened PDP offices and addressed a few words to the local people who had gathered to receive him. That night we reached Dera Ghazi Khan where I put my guests up at Mazari Manzil, a large brick edifice constructed at the turn of the century shortly after the resettlement of the old town which had been flooded into extinction. The next day the Air Marshal made a speech at the local Bar Council before we proceeded onwards to Multan where I bade farewell to my guests.

In the last week of September 1969 Asghar Khan insisted that I accompany him and his small delegation to Dhaka to participate in the PDP's first party convention. It was my first trip to the eastern wing. I was quite taken aback by the sheer 'foreignness' of the place, despite the fact that it was a constituent part of one and the same country. The most obvious sign was the absence of the Arabic script, all signs were either in Bengali or English. The dress of the people was distinctly different - there was no sign of the ubiquitous *shalwar kameez* of the western wing. Their language and culture had little similarity with the one I was accustomed to; our cultural environment had been greatly influenced by neighboring Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, while theirs was much more indigenous. Even the climate and flora were of a tropical nature, so dissimilar to the general aridity of West Pakistan. The reality of the predicament was not lost on me. If East Pakistan seemed an alien land to me, the Bengalis of East Pakistan were equally likely to view West Pakistanis in a similar light, but with an added acerbic edge to it. The West Pakistanis, had virtually ruled them as a colony for two decades, and their bitterness towards us was understandable. In the riverine country of deltas we were distinct outsiders. Having witnessed the suppression of Baloch rights at close hand, I had looked upon the treatment meted out to East Pakistan to be equally as abysmal. Now that I had actually visited the province, my sympathies for the suppressed Bengalis increased markedly.

The POP convention proved to be a blow to Asghar Khan. Having accepted the reality that the party president would have to be an East Pakistani, the Air Marshal conceded the post to Nurul Amin and was keen to be elected to the post of party secretary-general. He was clearly the most publicly acclaimed figure at the convention and commanded considerable respect, but in the scheming nature of politics that was not simply enough. Asghar Khan was opposed by a clique of West Pakistanis led by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan who were supporting Mian Naseem Hasan from Lahore. Nasrullah Khan and his political cronies, with years of similar experience, were experts in the intrigues of back-room politics. Before the election for the party secretary-general took place, it dawned on us that the Air Marshal would lose. A number of us then

prevailed upon him to withdraw from the contest and save himself the embarrassment of a public humiliation.

On 25 October the convention of West Pakistan PDP took place. It turned out to be a duplicitous game between the three factions present. The factions belonged to Asghar Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad AH and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. The next day Nasrullah Khan, made use of his abundant store of political guile, got himself elected as the party's West Pakistan President. On Asghar Khan's persuasions I stood and got elected as one of the party vice-presidents. It proved to be an extremely brief tenure for me. It was not long after the convention that Asghar Khan decided to resign from the POP. Surprisingly, once more he reached this decision without consulting anyone. Having joined the party because of my friendship with him I saw little reason to continue my link with the POP. I resigned as well, taking a large number of supporters from District Dera Ghazi Khan and the Sindh districts of Jacobabad and Sukkur with me.

It was about this time that I proffered some unsolicited advice to the Air Marshal. Having seen the shenanigans of politicians close at hand I believed it was best for him to retire from politics altogether. I told him that a time might come when people, tiring of the existing political leadership, would themselves seek him to serve as their leader. The alternative in my view held little for him. He was by nature not suited to wiles and deceptions that were practiced in our local politics. Nor as a matter of fact was I. When a comparatively lesser political figure like Nasrullah Khan, who had last won an election in the Punjab provincial elections of 1951, could politically surpass a leader who was at the very peak of his national acclaim, little else remained to be said. I felt it best for Asghar Khan to keep himself out from the fray and maintain a dignified silence. But it was not to be. On 25 December 1969 the Air Marshal visited me in Sonmiani, bringing his daughter Shireen with him. While at my village, they stayed overnight at my guest house. He told me that because of the intense pressure that his supporters had brought to bear on him, he was left with little choice but to reenter politics. Asghar Khan now wanted to launch Tehrik-e-Istaqlal and wished to persuade me to join with him. It was at this stage that I politely declined his offer. I much admired the man for his integrity and honesty, but I decided that my future politics would be determined by my independence.

The other hero of the anti-Ayub Khan movement was enjoying better luck. With the fall of Ayub and his established link with General Peerzada, Bhutto was no longer a man hounded by the government. In July 1969 I was to invite Bhutto and his wife to my house. The occasion was a visit to Pakistan by Bob Lebacqz, then Belgian Ambassador to Indonesia, and his wife, Jessie. The Lebacqzs had previously been posted at Karachi and had become good friends with Souriya and I. While here they had also established very cordial relationships with Zulfikar and Nusrat Bhutto. I hosted a dinner for them and invited all their friends and acquaintances at Karachi, including the Bhuttos. It turned

out to be an extremely pleasant affair. Later in the evening, I noticed two of my guests engaged in what seemed to be a rather earnest conversation. I decided to join them and seated myself beside Bhutto and Hank Ramsay, the local US Consul General. Bhutto was reassuring the American diplomat that he was not antiAmerican, as every one assumed he was. He kept referring to his years as a student in California and how much he had learned to love the place. Bhutto was adamant that it was his opponents and the government intelligence departments that insisted on tagging him with the anti-US label. He asked the diplomat to inform his government that whatever he said was simply politics and should not be taken as his personal view, and if anything, his personal views were completely opposite. After a while having done his best to convince the diplomat of his American sympathies I recall Bhutto requesting a favor from him. He wanted a place at Radcliffe College for his daughter Benazir. Ramsay said he would speak to his superiors in Washington and convey the request. He then asked about Benazir's school grades. Bhutto looking a bit abashed replied, I am afraid they are not particularly good. That is why I, as a former foreign minister of this country, will request it as a special favor from the State Department. Please do ask your people to help me out on this one.'

During this period I remained in close touch with my friends in Balochistan. The ending of the One Unit system in West Pakistan on 1 July 1970 was an exceptional event for the people of Balochistan - it was finally being accorded the status of a full-fledged province. I was invited to join the festivities. I flew to Quetta on 30 June and was received at the airport by two delighted men, Akbar Bugti and Attaullah Mengal, both of whom had been bitter opponents of the One Unit scheme. Early morning the next day I went with Akbar to watch Khair Buksh Marri raise the National Awami Party flag at their provincial party office. Despite his strong political affiliations with NAP, Akbar Bugti had been hampered from joining the party. On his release from jail the Martial Law government had imposed a five-year ban on him preventing him from participating in any political activity. Later that morning, much to the chagrin of my Baloch colleagues, in particular Akbar Bugti, I attended the swearing-in ceremony of my friend General Riaz Hussain as the Governor of Balochistan. I have always maintained that politics should not preclude one from sustaining the common courtesies created by personal relationships. Riaz Hussain was a good human being and his uniform and new elevated status did not detract from his fine personal qualities. In the evening I participated in a torchlight procession through the streets of Quetta commemorating the end of the One Unit before attending a dinner for Sheikh Mujib held by Muhammad Khan Raisani. Mujib had made Raisani Balochistan's provincial President of the Awami League on Akbar Bugti's advice.

I had met Mujib on two previous occasions, once during my visit to Dhaka with Asghar Khan, and later more recently at Karachi. On both meetings I had left without being impressed by the man. It seemed that he had been more favored by circumstances rather than any outstanding leadership qualities. His skills undoubtedly lay in making

rousing speeches. He was an accomplished agitator. The next day during a lunch given by Akbar Bugti, I had another opportunity of meeting him. On this occasion he made a commitment that in the upcoming National Assembly he would support all demands for giving the people of Balochistan their due rights. The Baloch politicians in return expressed their open empathy with the plight of the Bengalis.

* * *

Following the practice established by Ayub Khan in the 1950s, the members of the Army junta found it now opportune to indulge in back-room politics. Army officers as a class tend to be Rightist in their political thinking. Generals such as Umar, the National Security Adviser and the retired Major-General Sher Ali Khan, the Minister for Information, were no different.¹⁹⁴ After piecing together various reliable sources one is able to surmise that a number of generals devised a deliberate strategy to sabotage left-wing parties in the forthcoming elections. From the available evidence it is clear that they had received Yahya Khan's blessing to carry out their plans. Their scheme, which in itself is reasonably well-known, was to bring about a unification of all the separate versions of Muslim League under one banner under Abdul Qayum Khan and provide it with unlimited funds to gain a substantial electoral victory.

Shaukat Hayat writes that Mumtaz Daultana and he were summoned to meet Yahya Khan. Daultana was then the party president, and Hayat, the party secretary general, of the Council Muslim League. Yahya Khan requested these two politicians to combine their party with the Convention Muslim League under the banner of a united Muslim League. The General added that he would request Abdul Qayum Khan to bring his Muslim League faction into the fold as well.¹⁹⁵ But as Herbert Feldman quite validly points out, the leaders of both Council and Convention Muslim League were only too aware that by virtue of his association with the Army junta, Qayum Khan would quickly gain the ascendancy over the combined Leagues, leaving the others floundering in his wake.¹⁹⁶ As far as the Rightist generals were concerned Qayum Khan was a politician of whom they approved. Not only would he be amenable to their control, he had also proved in the past to be a ruthlessly successful politician in the NWFP. In their minds he was a suitable antidote to the rising spectre of socialism. Despite the pressure exerted by the administration, the anticipated unification of the Leagues never took place, but at the same time individuals such as the Khan of Kalat and the Pir of Pagaro readily acceded to the demands made upon them and joined Qayum's League.

Under Ayub Khan the Convention Muslim League had accumulated a vast fortune in its party coffers. In June 1970 by issuing a Martial Law Order, Yahya Khan seized the

¹⁹⁴ On one occasion Major-General Sher Ali Khan had gone as far as to declare that all persons who professed to be socialists were *kaffirs*: Her Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 46 (n).

¹⁹⁵ Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *The Nation that Lost its Soul*, p. 276.

¹⁹⁶ Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

party funds. The Order signed by Yahya Khan simply stated, 'No person shall henceforth operate the accounts of the said funds except in accordance with orders issued by me'.¹⁹⁷ These funds were then said to be used to finance favored political parties. Not surprisingly, Qayum Khan was able to field not less than 132 candidates for the elections. All of this required money. Interestingly, strong suspicions also arose, as to the source of Bhutto's People's Party funding. In the beginning of 1970, the president of the Convention Muslim League accused Bhutto of receiving money from its confiscated party funds in the hands of the government.¹⁹⁸ By mid-1970 it was obvious that in West Pakistan the largest number of party flags visible belonged to the People's Party. Now further objections were raised against PPP querying the source of its expenditure of 'a colossal amount of money on hoisting flags'.¹⁹⁹ Shaukat Hayat maintains that the Military junta had decided to back Qayum Khan in the NWFP and Bhutto in Punjab and Sindh.²⁰⁰ Despite his constant slogans of 'Islamic Socialism', the junta knew by now that Bhutto's commitment to socialism was less than lukewarm and nothing more than an appealing political guise. Throughout this period Bhutto not only remained friendly with General Peerzada but he also carefully cultivated his links with General Gul Hassan and the new Air Force Chief, Air Marshal Rahim Khan. Bhutto, Rahim Khan and Gul Hassan used to frequently meet, often at their mutual friend Iqbal Shahban's place in Islamabad, and have lengthy convivial chats over drinks. Gul Hassan and Rahim Khan were coming to the conclusion that they now understood Bhutto and would provide support to him when the opportunity later arose.

* * *

Sometime later I was approached by Air Marshal Rahim Khan, with whom I was on quite friendly terms. I had known him since 1958, when he been stationed at the Drigh Air Force Base at Karachi. On one occasion my family and I had stayed with him and his wife, Mehru, as their guests at the Air Force Headquarters at Badaber, near Peshawar, for a number of days at their invitation. Rahim had been known to be a brilliant and daring fighter pilot. While I was at Sonmiani I received a message that the Air Chief urgently wished to meet with me. I returned to Karachi a couple of days later and contacted him. Having been friendly with him for a number of years, I was taken aback when the purpose of the meeting dawned on me. Rahim Khan was very eager that I join the PPP. In a blunt rejoinder, I asked him if he trusted Bhutto, to which he gave me an interesting reply. Rahim Khan's answer was that Bhutto was an enigma to him, but when compared to the other alternatives, he offered the best option. As if to illustrate his opinion of Bhutto, he related an incident, which, he said, had bewildered him. Rahim Khan told me that recently one evening Bhutto had called on him at his home in Peshawar. The two of them were sitting chatting over drinks when Rahim

¹⁹⁷ Martial Law Order No. 14, dated 12 June 1970.

¹⁹⁸ *Dawn*, 14 January 1970.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 25 August 1970.

²⁰⁰ Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

Khan's orderly informed him that two gentlemen had just arrived who wished to meet with Bhutto. Annoyed at the intrusion, Bhutto asked the Air Force Chief's orderly to find out who the men were. They turned out to be none other than two of Bhutto's right-hand men, Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Khurshid Hasan Meer. According to Rahim Khan, Bhutto snapped at the orderly, 'Tell them to wait outside!' At this stage Rahim Khan decided to intervene and told Bhutto that as it was his house he felt it impolite to have these two men waiting outside. But Bhutto remained obdurate. He insisted that they not be allowed in. As a compromise Rahim Khan arranged for Khar and Meer to be seated in his veranda and sent out whiskys for them. Bhutto spent a leisurely hour or more chatting with Rahim Khan before taking his leave. On his way out, as he was stepping into his waiting car, Bhutto summoned Khar and Meer. Then in Rahim Khan's presence he curtly admonished them as if they were mere schoolboys. 'Do the two of you have nothing better to do but to follow me all over about the place!' And saying that, he abruptly drove away leaving Khar and Meer standing there ashen-faced much to Rahim Khan's embarrassment.

After hearing Rahim Khan relate his experience, I asked him again, 'Do you trust Bhutto?' I recall him answering, 'Maybe not, but who else have we got? It seemed obvious to me that my friend approved of Bhutto only to the extent that he disliked the others. Having been accustomed to a liberal way of life, people like Air Marshal Rahim Khan and General Gul Hassan feared the onset of religious conservatism. Despite their misgivings they were prepared to support Bhutto simply because they perceived him to possess what they believed was a progressive and broad-minded approach to society. In trying to convince me to join up with the PPP, Rahim Khan had my interest at heart. He seemed certain that Bhutto was soon going to be in power and that it would benefit me politically to join up with him at this early stage. He was clearly disappointed with my refusal. In the months that followed he would make further attempts to convince me to change my mind.

After the death of my brother Sher Jan, the sole supervision of Mazari tribal affairs devolved on me. My elder brother Mir Balakh Sher had by now made it abundantly clear that this task held little interest for him, and he continued with his extended sojourns in the cities of Karachi and Lahore. My duties led me to spend more and more time in Sonmiani and Rojhan. The 1965 presidential elections and my active lead in Miss Jinnah's campaign in the district, had indirectly established my independent credentials as a political entity of the area, and during this struggle against Ayub Khan I had come to meet and become familiar with virtually every political personality within the large-district of Dera Ghazi Khan (now a provincial division). By the time the 1970 elections were announced, it was near impossible for the Mazari family to ignore my presence in the area, and so they had little choice but to nominate me as a candidate for the elections. I filed my papers for the national seat for the area while Mir Balakh Sher opted for the provincial seat. The 1970 election campaign was the lengthiest in local history. The candidates had to file their nomination papers by June. A terrible cyclone

devastated East Pakistan forcing a postponement in the elections which were eventually held in late December.

It was the nature of district politics that our campaign turned into two rival camps: the Mazari group versus the Leghari group. The political rivalry between the two families had a lengthy history dating back to the 1920s. After the death of Nawab Sir Bahram Khan Mazari, quickly followed by the deaths of my uncle and father, the Mazari primacy in the district had passed on to Nawab Jamal Khan Leghari, who had soon emerged as the most capable leader in the district. Jamal Khan provided leadership to the district until a few years after Partition. As soon as my brother Mir Balakh Sher attained the age of majority in 1949, he entered local politics and defeated Nawab Jamal Khan Leghari's son and successor Sirdar Muhammad Khan, in the district election becoming Chairman of the Dera Ghazi Khan District Board. From then onwards the Mazari group remained in ascendancy in district politics. In 1955 Mir Balakh Sher once more, this time in his bid for the national Assembly, defeated Muhammad Khan Leghari.²⁰¹ The 1970 elections were regarded locally as a further assessment of the Mazari domination within the district. The Legharis were not going to acquiesce in their defeat without a fight.

Taking the Mazari tribal vote for granted, I concentrated instead in the northern areas of the constituency which included other Baloch tribes such as the Drishaks, the Gurchanis and a portion of the Legharis (the Leghari family seat of Choti fell within my electoral boundaries). I was helped in my task by my brother Mir Balakh Sher and Nasrullah Drishak, both contestants for the two southern provincial seats in the district. I took an independent stand from the Mazari group by supporting Dr Nazir Ahmed of Jamaat-i-Islami against their chosen candidate for the other national seat from Dera Ghazi Khan. Nazir Ahmed practiced as a homoeopath in the town of Dera Ghazi Khan and had established himself as a person of honesty and integrity. A man of modest means, he would cycle to visit his patients. I had become acquainted with him during Miss Jinnah's campaign in 1964 and come to admire him for his sincerity and sense of dedication. Impressed as I was with him, I began openly canvassing for Nazir Ahmed. His eventual success and subsequent courageous performance in the National Assembly made whatever effort I made on his behalf well worth it.

The election results proved to be most satisfactory. I managed to win with a substantial margin. Dr Nazir Ahmed joined me as the second representative to the National Assembly from the district. In the provincial elections both Mir Balakh Sher and Nasrullah Drishak won by a large lead. The Legharis, not surprisingly, held onto their two provincial seats within their area, but their leader Muhammad Khan suffered a crushing blow in his run for the National Assembly seat. Not only did he lose to the

²⁰¹ Upset at his son Muhammad Khan's defeat in his home seat, Nawab Jamal Khan later used his political influence and got him elected to the National Assembly from Sahiwal.

humble homoeopath from Dera Ghazi Khan, but he only managed to get a sixth place in the contest and suffered the ignominy of losing his deposit. On the national level I was saddened to learn of Asghar Khan's defeat in Rawalpindi at the hands of a little known retired Air Force non-commissioned officer, Khurshid Hasan Meer of the PPP.

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Bhutto showed amazing vitality during the election campaign as he toured West Pakistan, at times addressing six gatherings a day-making a host of extravagant promises. In Punjab, to the delight of the locals, he vented his venomous rage against India. He appealed to their Punjabi pride by insisting that in the 1965 War their 'victory' had been betrayed at Tashkent, and captivated their attention by dramatically promising to reveal the sordid secret behind the 'betrayal'.²⁰² In Sindh he portrayed himself as a native born man of the people. In the urban areas he talked about higher wages for the working classes and restrictions on the profits of the 'bloated' industrial elite. He offered all things to all men. He appealed directly to the masses by often irreverently dancing-even on occasion wiggling around making a vulgar parody of Indira Gandhi - on the stage in front of thousands. Mocking the public stature of his rivals, he would publicly give them belittling nicknames. At times he would even sink to cruder forms of abuse. Yet he kept his venom selective. In the politically key province of Punjab, Bhutto was nervous of Mumtaz Daultana's strength. One of his admirers noted that in the pre-election days Bhutto '... expected some sort of [future] political alliance with Daultana. He refrained from personal public attacks against him, studiously avoid public disagreements with and never really carried his election campaign to Daultana's home territory of Vehari.'²⁰³

In fact Bhutto never really expected the electoral landslide he eventually received in the western wing. In March 1970 he had himself told me that, 'Inshallah, I should get between thirty to thirty-five seats in the National Assembly'. G. W. Choudhury also mentions that in his talks with the PPP leader in June 1970, Bhutto revealed to him that his greatest expectation was to win forty seats to the National Assembly.²⁰⁴ In the end, he ended up netting over twice that number. After ten years of Ayub Khan the people desired a complete change. The election result was due as much to Bhutto's success as it was the failure of the older breed of politicians. The Round Table Conference had tainted them in the eyes of the public. They had been perceived to be selfishly ambitious men who had bickered among themselves over future spoils without making seriously genuine demands for the return of the democratic process. Further as Daultana and the others had stubbornly relied on their past laurels and not bothered to offer anything

²⁰² As most people know the so-called secrets of Tashkent were nothing more than a fraudulent device used to play upon gullible popular opinion. Naturally Bhutto never revealed these secrets. They had been non-existent from the very beginning.

²⁰³ S. Taseer, *Bhutto, a political biography*, Ithaca Press, London, 1979 p. 107.

²⁰⁴ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

new in their election campaigns to the jaded public, their political statures were considerably weakened. Not surprisingly in the Punjab, where PPP won sixty-two out of a total of eighty-two seats to the National Assembly, greater political awareness linked to higher literacy rates played a key factor in this move for change. Later analysis showed that the urban and the more advanced rural *tehsils* voted heavily for the PPP.²⁰⁵

Unlike Punjab, in Sindh Bhutto resorted to using traditional 'feudal' leverage. He relied on the local power of such personalities as Mir Rasool Buksh Talpur of Hyderabad. Makhdoom Talib-ul-Maula from Hala, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi from Nawabshah, Pir of Ranipur and other *pirs* and *waderos* of Sindh. Undoubtedly Bhutto's own popularity as a native Sindhi also greatly enhanced his resulting success at the polls in this southern province. The PPP won eighteen out of the total of twenty-seven seats allocated to Sindh for the National Assembly. In the remaining two provinces of Pakistan, the PPP failed dismally, winning only one seat out of twenty-five in the NWFP, and none in Balochistan.

What is often overlooked about the PPP's performance in the 1970 elections was that its victory in West Pakistan was disproportionately large in comparison to the actual percentage of votes it received. This is clearly revealed in the following table:

Percentage of Valid Votes polled by the PPP in the 1970 National Elections²⁰⁶

East Pakistan	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochisian	Total Pakistan	Total West Pakistan
	41.66%	44.95%	14.28%	2.38%	18.63%	38.89%

Two factors helped the PPP receive an unduly large share of seats in proportion to the votes cast for it. One factor was the system of plurality-based election in single-member constituencies, more commonly known as the 'first past the post' system in which the candidate with the most votes wins. The other factor which assisted the PPP was that a total of 798 candidates contested the 138 National Assembly seats in West Pakistan. These rival candidates divided the vote among themselves to PPP's great advantage. In seventy-four constituencies in the Punjab, four or more candidates contested each seat. In ten constituencies as many as seven contested, and in another ten as many as eight candidates contested. Throughout the province a one-on-one contest was witnessed in only a single constituency.²⁰⁷ With approximately 39 percent of the vote in West Pakistan, the PPP managed to capture nearly 60 percent of the West Pakistan's seats in the National Assembly. With only one voter in three supporting the PPP in West

²⁰⁵ Shahid J. Burki and Craig Baxter, *Socio-economic Indicators of the People's Party Vote in the Punjab: A Study at Tehsil Level* (in: W. H. Wriggins (editor), *Pakistan in Transition*, University of Islamabad Press Islamabad, 1975, p. 164-5).

²⁰⁶ *Report on the General Elections Pakistan 1970-74*, Vol. I, Election Commission of Pakistan, Karachi, 1972.

²⁰⁷ *Report on the General Elections Pakistan 1970-71*, Vol. I, *ibid.*, pp. 197-9, 204-5.

Pakistan, the party won nearly two-thirds of the voters' representation in the national Parliament.

In NWFP the votes represented a confused division of votes between Qayum Khan's Muslim League, Wali Khan's National Awami Party (NAP) and the religious elements represented by Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Islam (JUI). Out of a total of eighteen seats from NWFP's 'settled area', Qayum Khan won only seven, showing that despite the funds and support from the Army junta his political powers had declined considerably even within his home province. Wali Khan and his NAP won three seats. The religious southern part of the province gave six seats to JUI. The remaining two seats were bagged by the PPP and the Jamaat-i-Islami. As usual the Tribal Area of NWFP provided a further seven seats which went to the so-called independent *maliks*.²⁰⁸

Balochistan had only four National Assembly seats. The Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, had put up two of his sons for elections. He had earlier been persuaded by General Yahya Khan's brother, Agha Muhammad Ali, the chief of the Intelligence Bureau, to join Qayum Khan's Muslim League. The Khan actively canvassed for his sons, but his position had been weakened considerably by his earlier political somersaults. Not only had he previously joined Ayub Khan and publicly acclaimed the locally detested One Unit scheme, he had deserted Ayub Khan after his fall and had openly lionized his successor Yahya Khan the moment Martial Law had been imposed. Having diminished his position it was not surprising that his sons were both routed in the elections by their NAP rivals. Agha Mohiuddin was beaten soundly by Ghous Buksh Bizenjo, and the President of the Baloch Student's Organization, Abdul Hai Baluch defeated Agha Yahya Jan. The third NAP seat was won by Khair Buksh Marri. The fourth elected representative was a JUI candidate who won from a Pushto speaking constituency. The elections had finally given the people of Balochistan an opportunity to be represented by leaders from within their own province.

Lastly and most importantly, in East Pakistan the Awami League captured slightly over 75 percent of the province's votes. It swept to a parliamentary majority by winning 160 out of 162 East Pakistani seats, which represented 53 percent of the total of 300 seats in the National Assembly. This landslide win would now lead to national cataclysm. Not only was Mujib in the position to form the government, but due to Yahya Khan's simple-minded blunder, he could legally choose his own Constitution and have it adopted in the new Assembly by use of a simple majority.

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²⁰⁸ With minuscule electorates these Maliks openly bribe the voters. The highest bidder always manages to win the election. These days with the presence of drug money, the ones elected are inevitably tainted with criminality. These Maliks invariably become close supporters of whichever government takes power. Sadly, every government of the day supports the existence of these political 'parasites' simply because it relies on them for their backing.

In the Provincial elections the results were as follows:²⁰⁹

Province	Total Seats	PPP	PML (Q)	PML Coun	PML Conv	JUI	JU	Jamaat-i-	NAP	Other Parties	Independents
Punjab	180	113	6	16	5	2	4	1		6	27
Sindh	60	28	5	4		7	1			1	14
NWFP	40	3	10	1	2	4		1	13		6
Balochistan	20		2			3			8	1	6

In East Pakistan the Awami League captured 288 out of the total 300 seats, losing only 12 seats of which 7 were won by independents. In West Pakistan the PPP got a majority only in the Punjab. Despite subsequent claims to the contrary, the PPP did not get a majority in Sindh.

* * *

There were three major players in the national catastrophe that was to follow - Yahya Khan, Mujib and Bhutto. In earlier years I had occasionally seen General Yahya Khan at social gatherings, but he made little impression on me as an individual. Others who knew him better found him to be a cheerful extrovert and a bon vivant, with a known appetite for whisky and a predilection for womanizing. Sir Morrice James, a British High Commissioner to Pakistan recalls:

... as General Officer Commanding Pakistan troops in the East Wing, [Yahya Khan] invited me to dinner one evening in his mess. Afterwards there was dancing, and Yahya in a mood of good humored tomfoolery took over the regimental bandmaster's hat and baton, and for some time conducted the music. For Ayub to have unbent in this way would have been unthinkable.²¹⁰

Unlike Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan had acquired a reasonable length of experience at the front. During the Second World War he had served in North Africa, (where he was taken prisoner, but escaped), Iraq and Italy. Later in the Pakistan Army - at the age of thirty-four - he achieved the distinction of becoming the youngest brigadier ever. Ayub Khan would never have made Yahya Khan the Commander-in-Chief of the Army if he had thought that Yahya Khan had the potential to threaten his position one day. Clearly, Yahya Khan had been chosen for this senior position for the 'wrong kind of credentials'. Nevertheless most of his professional associates spoke well of him. His close subordinate General Gul Hassan described him as a successful Chief of General Staff by saying: 'I found him to be competent, decisive, broad-minded, easy in manner which is a sign of confidence, and above all he possessed a remarkable memory and a

²⁰⁹ *Report on the General Elections Pakistan 1970-71*, Vol. 2, pp. 356-7.

²¹⁰ Sir Morrice James, *Pakistan Chronicle*, Oxford, London, p. 171.

high IQ. All these traits were refreshing when comparing him with most of the other generals of the time.' By nature Yahya Khan was not a devious man. In approaching the crisis in East Pakistan there is no evidence to suggest that Yahya Khan worked on a pre-determined plan on dealing with Mujib. He went along taking things as they came and tried to manage them to the best of his abilities. Placing total trust in Mujib's word proved to be an unforgivable mistake. He was known to be a poor judge of character. His subordinate General Attiqur Rahman, referring to Yahya Khan, once commented: 'He was a bit too kind-hearted to his close cronies, and employed as Principal Staff Officers at GHQ when they were palpably not equipped professionally for such appointment.'²¹¹

It is felt that becoming president led to Yahya Khan's undoing. Instead of surrounding himself with men of proven ability, he chose to rely on his army cronies, including his close friend from the Indian Military Academy days, General Hamid, and others such as Generals Peerzada and Umar. Gul Hassan, who as Chief of General Staff was a witness to these events, speaks scathingly of these generals, calling them the GHQ Mafia, and maintains that 'they exerted unconscionable and self seeking pressures on the President, who became a puppet in their hands'. Such a statement gives little confidence in the ability of a man who had been thrust into a position of supreme responsibility. It becomes apparent that after the elections when Yahya Khan finally concluded that Mujib had deceived him on the negotiability of his Six Points, he became confounded by the nature of his perilous predicament. By this time he had largely cut himself off from all but his close companions, and regularly indulged himself senseless in alcohol. Gul Hassan recalls: 'In this bewildering and confusing environment, our professional sycophants found easy entry, and volunteered to help the President take major decisions in an alcoholic haze'.²¹² And sadly that seems to have been the condition of the Army junta when it decided to crush the Awami Party with military might, leading to a civil war which broke the country into two pieces.

Mujib was an entirely different man from Yahya Khan. His rise to political prominence began when as a student leader he defeated the sitting chief minister, Nurul Amin, from his provincial constituency. This occurred in the 1954 elections which saw the rout of the Muslim League in East Pakistan. Shortly afterwards he became a minister in the brief United Front government of Fazlul Haq which lasted less than two months before it was summarily dismissed by the Federal Government. Within a year he was a minister in the Awami League government under Attaur-Rahman Khan. Mujib soon emerged as a key lieutenant of the Awami League leader, H. S. Suhrawardy. Upon Suhrawardy's death in 1963, the mantle of party leadership fell on the forty-three-year-old Mujib. He was a fiery orator with the ability to mesmerize the crowd with

²¹¹ (Lieut.-General) M. Attiqur Rahman, *Back to the Pavilion*, p. 227.

²¹² Lt.-General Gul Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 257 and pp. 288-9.

flamboyant rhetoric.²¹³ Mujib also had a talent in directing a political organization, a quality Suhrawardy had found extremely useful. But he had never been known to be a political thinker or much of a strategist. The Awami League's Six Point programme had not been his creation, but in 1966, armed with this new political message, he began to stump the East Pakistani countryside. Using his powerful oratory he preached the gospel of total autonomy and gained many adherents. Soon afterwards the Ayub Khan regime had him jailed. From March 1966 he was shunted from one jail to another on various charges of making seditious speeches and for other subversive activities. In 1968, having arrested a large number of people in the Agartala Conspiracy case, the Government decided, after a few days, to implicate Mujib in the case as well. The reaction among the Bengali intelligentsia was one of utter disbelief. In the eyes of the East Pakistani masses, Mujib became a martyr overnight. He had become East Pakistan's principal symbol of defiance against tyranny.

Ayub Khan had been pressurized by politicians to release Mujib at the time of the Round Table Conference in February 1969. Mujib, however, refused to back down from his Six Points, thereby dooming the RTC. It has been claimed that he was offered the prime ministership at this stage by a desperate Ayub Khan, but Mujib was nervous of jeopardizing his image with the Bengalis. It was also said that another reason for him to turn down Ayub Khan's offer was that some generals had secretly offered him the alternative of gaining legitimate power through elections. None of this can be proved. The downfall of Ayub Khan and his successor Yahya Khan's promise to hold elections, offered the opportunity that Mujib and his Awami League had long sought.

Early on in his reign, Yahya Khan realized the importance of Mujib and began making attempts to win him over. The general adopted the principle of 'one-man-one-vote' conceding the majority of the proposed future Parliament to the East Wing. Yahya Khan, in an effort to appease Mujib, also committed the fatal blunder of permitting the future Constitution to be determined by a simple majority of the new National Assembly. A political scientist later commenting on the situation stated that Yahya Khan's concerted attempts to placate the leader of the Awami League led Mujib to privately conclude that 'Yahya could not say "no" to him'.²¹⁴ In return the Bengali leader managed to convince Yahya Khan that his Six Points were negotiable, but due to political pressure imposed upon him, he could not openly compromise his position until the elections were over.

The first post-electoral broadside was fired by Bhutto who announced on 21 December 1970 that any constitutional arrangement which excluded him and his PPP would be doomed to failure. Within a short time he received a contemptuous rejoinder from Tajuddin Ahmed, the General-Secretary of the Awami League, unequivocally stating

²¹³ In his book Safdar Mahmood gives examples of how Mujib would on occasion purposely misrepresent facts to exploit the emotions of his audiences: Safdar Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided*, Ferozsons, Lahore, 198 p. 80.

²¹⁴ Safdar Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided*, ibid., p. 59.

that the Awami League could frame the Constitution with or without the cooperation of any other party. All through his election campaign, Bhutto had ignored Mujib and his Six Points. Instead, he had concentrated on maximizing his appeal in West Pakistan to win as many votes for the PPP as he possibly could. With the unexpected size of his victory in the West Wing, Bhutto found himself faced with a dilemma. Admittedly he had attained a large electoral victory within the bounds of West Pakistan, in terms of parliamentary democracy it was an ephemeral win. PPP's 81 seats were nowhere close to the Awami League majority of 160 seats in the National Assembly. Under the LFO the new Constitution required only a simple majority in the National Assembly. The Awami League could frame the Constitution singlehandedly, leaving the PPP with no role to play in its framing. And more importantly Bhutto would be restricted to playing the limited role of the leader of the Opposition. Obsessed as he was with obtaining power, the alternative was equally as frustrating for him. If he vehemently opposed the Awami League's constitutional proposal and somehow succeeded in blocking its passage, he would have to face new general elections. Under the Legal Framework Order if the Constitution was not passed within 120 days the Assembly would stand automatically dissolved.²¹⁵ By then the West Pakistani politicians opposed to him, who were now cognizant of Bhutto's voting strength, would combine into a coalition electoral grouping directed against him. This would almost certainly result in a substantial decline in the seats that the PPP won in any future election. Faced with these unpleasant choices Bhutto sought a third option to solve his predicament. Fortunately for him the senior generals of the Army junta soon made his task all the more easier.

Yahya Khan and his generals had not foreseen that Mujib would gain an absolute parliamentary majority in the polls.²¹⁶ Their intelligence reports had indicated a substantial victory for the Awami League and they had made surreptitious efforts to dilute the party's electoral chances by providing funds to parties such as the Muslim League and Nurul Amin's Pakistan Democratic Party, which had launched a movement in East Pakistan against the Six Point programme. After the regime's disastrous failure to influence the election results, one of the major proponents of the scheme, General Sher Ali Khan, was made to resign his Cabinet post on 14 December 1970, three days before the provincial elections were to be held.

In January 1971 Yahya Khan invited Mujib to Islamabad for discussions, but Mujib declined to come to West Pakistan. Instead, it was Yahya Khan who had to go to Dhaka to meet with Mujib. Dr G. W. Choudhury, who then acted as one of the President's constitutional and political advisers, recalls:

²¹⁵ According to General Rao Farman Ali, Yahya Khan when told that 120-day period might be too short, replied that he wanted pressure on the politicians, otherwise 'they would take ten years to get a result like the first Constituent Assembly': Rao Farman Ali interviewed by Arfan Siddiqui, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

²¹⁶ Mujib told Shaukat Hayat in January 1971 that he had offered twenty to thirty uncontested seats to the Muslim League in East Pakistan, 'but the offer had been spurned on account of their over-estimates of their own strength and popularity or ... at the behest of the junta': Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

Yahya had expectations that Mujib would show him the Awami League draft constitution as he had pledged to do during their secret meetings on the eve of the elections. For this reason Yahya asked me to accompany him to Dacca so that someone could advise him on Mujib's draft constitution. The first meeting between Yahya and Mujib took place on January 12 and lasted over three hours; no other person was present. As soon as the meeting was over, I received and answered a summons from the President's House to see Yahya. I found him bitter and frustrated. He told me: 'Mujib has let me down. Those who warned me against him were right; I was wrong in trusting this person.' He then gave me the substance of his discussion with Mujib in great anguish as well as anger. Mujib had refused to show him the draft constitution as he had solemnly promised before the election. He made it clear to Yahya that as leader of the majority party, he and he alone, was responsible for the new constitution; Yahya's job was to summon the Assembly immediately; he threatened Yahya with 'dire consequences' if he failed to do so. For Yahya it was the greatest shock; he had taken a great risk by putting his faith in Mujib's assurances and promises. His image among the army generals would be seriously affected as he had proved to be naive in dealing with Mujib.²¹⁷

In the absence of any other witness account to the crucial Yahya-Mujib talks of January 1971, the benefit of doubt should be given to G. W. Choudhury. As someone closely involved in the proceedings as he was, there is an inherent danger of slanting his account favorably towards himself. But as Choudhury prides on himself as a political scientist and an academic, one should place some value on his reliability. Choudhury also insists that at this stage Yahya Khan was prepared to concede virtually all the Six Points with the exception of only two changes.²¹⁸ A federal government even if truncated to the Six Points' envisaged three functions (defence, foreign affairs and currency) required revenue to run them. Yahya Khan wanted the Awami League to make constitutional guarantees that the Centre would receive a fixed percentage of taxes raised by the provinces. It should therefore not have to depend on the largesse of the federating units, which might vary from time to time according to their whim. The second change that Yahya Khan had wanted, related to the Six Points insistence on provincial governments being able to negotiate their own foreign trade and aid. According to Choudhury, Yahya Khan wished to insert a clause which permitted independent foreign trade and aid dealings provided such dealings were 'not against the fundamentals of the country's foreign policy'. The danger of possible Indian economic interference lay large on the military mind.

²¹⁷ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-50.

²¹⁸ See, chapter 3 for a summary of the Six Points.

The refusal to guarantee an allocation of funds to the future federal government held disastrous implications for the Army junta. The absence of proper revenue for the Centre would directly affect the defence budget and paralyze the Army. An American academic commenting on the situation said, The election results in the East had underscored the Awami League's demands for greater autonomy. It appears that certain members of Awami League felt that West Pakistan (the generals and other influentials) would not intervene in force in view of the magnitude of electoral support that existed for the Awami League's demands.²¹⁹ Nevertheless Yahya Khan still held hope for saner counsels to prevail. On leaving Dhaka after his frustrating talks with Mujib, he announced, 'Shaikh Mujibur Rahman is going to be the future prime minister of the country.'

It seems at this point in history the other generals of the junta began to take charge. On his return from Dhaka, on 17 January, Yahya Khan accompanied by Generals Hamid and Peerzada, flew to Larkana for consultations with Bhutto.²²⁰ The junta had now decided to enlist Bhutto's support in the government tussle with Mujib. His lobby of generals in the Junta now included Hamid, Umar, and Akbar (as well as his trusted benefactor Peerzada). With the rout of Muslim League they now saw Bhutto as a useful 'defender of national interests' against the 'perfidious' Mujib. As his compass point was always centred towards his own personal ambitions, Bhutto was now solely concerned about his prospective role in the new political system. His rival was Mujib. It soon became apparent that at this stage that Bhutto entered an understanding with a number of generals, whose views did not necessarily agree with those of their superior Yahya Khan. Bhutto's subsequent political maneuverings would clearly support this view.

Bhutto sent his aide Ghulam Mustafa Khar to Dhaka to meet with the Awami League leadership and arrange a 'summit' meeting of the two party leaders. Later Bhutto arrived at Dhaka on 27 January. Bhutto had several days of discussions with Mujib on the Six Points centred on the major topics of taxation and foreign trade. On one occasion the Bengali leader made it clear that East Pakistan would contribute to the defence budget 'in proportion to her representation (which was obviously very little: the writer's comment) in the armed forces. Bhutto opposed the idea saying that it would not be acceptable to the Army.'²²¹ The meetings went on till 31 January but on his departure

²¹⁹ Robert Laporte, Jr., *Power and Privilege, Influence and Decision in Pakistan*, University of California Press, 1975, p. 80.

²²⁰ General Rao Farman Ali who states that General Umar told him that during this meeting Bhutto (who repeatedly referred to Mujib as a 'traitor') suggested to Yahya Khan that the best way to test Mujib's patriotism was by delaying the Assembly meeting. If Mujib did not react adversely to the delay then he was a 'patriot', and if he responded wildly then Mujib did not have the interests of Pakistan at heart, and could be deemed to be a 'traitor'. According to Farman Ali this idea registered with Yahya Khan [writer's comments: Yahya Khan, later in February, when angered by Mujib's refusal to come to Islamabad would decide to implement this test with disastrous consequences]: Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

²²¹ Safdar Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

Bhutto indicated that no clear agreement or understanding had been reached.²²² Much has been made about the failure of these talks and doubts have been raised about Bhutto's sincerity of purpose in reaching an accord. A noteworthy critic was General Gul Hassan who said:

Something went wrong with the mission Bhutto was given. Instead of making attempts to solve the impasse, Bhutto offered his personal services: that he would be content with the portfolios of deputy prime minister or even foreign minister. According to a close source to the Sheikh, the latter declined Bhutto's gracious offer and remarked that there was sufficient talent in the Awami League to take care of such offices. Bhutto then spoke to the Sheikh in private, where I am told, he threatened Mujibur Rahman with dire consequences if he did not come to an understanding with him [Bhutto]. The threat confirmed whatever forebodings the Sheikh may have had about the intentions of the President and further hardened his attitude.²²³

Mujib became quite incensed at Bhutto's arrogance and presumptuousness, at his cavalier attitude towards a constitutional solution, and his apparent sense that Mujib's majority was in fact nothing more than a minority of a respectable size.²²⁴ A few weeks later in February 1971, Mujib is said to have told Shah Ahmed Noorani, the party president of Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Pakistan, that the essence of Bhutto's mission was to share power with him. Bhutto had demanded the deputy prime ministership among other things, and alluded to the fact that he not only represented the PPP but the Army as well.²²⁵ This was further corroborated by General Rao Farman Ali who later stated that Bhutto tried to impress on Mujib that he had the support of powerful generals in the Army.²²⁶

Bhutto had now gained the vital support of General Hamid and General Peerzada the senior-most members of the Army junta after Yahya Khan. These two generals, who had been at loggerheads with each other until now, united against their common enemy, Mujib. Hamid and Peerzada wished to pursue an aggressive approach to Mujib, as they had come to the conclusion that Yahya Khan's 'soft' approach had resulted in ignoble failure. Yahya Khan's position in the junta had considerably weakened as a consequence. Even his close adviser G. W. Choudhury confesses that in February 1971 he thought that Yahya Khan might be replaced by General Hamid. It was his belief that only the fear that the move might bring adverse reactions in Washington and Beijing

²²² Later Bhutto would write that he had been prepared to accept all of the Six Points with the exception of the 'half point' relating to foreign trade and aid. The so-called 'Five and half points': Z. A. Bhutto, *The Great Tragedy*, Vision Publications, Karachi 1971, pp. 24-5.

²²³ Lt.-General Gul Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

²²⁴ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession*, University of California, 1990, p. 70.

²²⁵ Safdar Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

²²⁶ General Rao Farman Ali's article in *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 26 April 1978.

that stalled the dissatisfied generals from acting.²²⁷ It is fair to state that while the leading generals and Bhutto had reached an understanding vis-a-vis Mujib, their motivations remained distinctly different. The generals wished to safeguard their interpretation of 'national integrity' and the institution of Army, while Bhutto continued to be haunted by his pursuit of personal power.

It is therefore logical that Bhutto, on his uniformed benefactors' instructions, conveyed a suitably aggressive tone to Mujib, even to the extent of threatening him with 'dire consequences', during the meetings. At the same time he followed his own private agenda in quest for personal power. It would not surprisingly lead Mujib, who was well aware of the Army junta's visit to Larkana, to conclude that his fears of collusion between West Pakistani politicians and the Army junta were justified. This perception of a conspiracy against him only further intensified his animosity towards Yahya Khan and his regime, leaving even less room for future negotiations. Bhutto's mission had resulted in widening the split between the two wings, and there are many who still hold the view that this had been done intentionally.

Shaukat Hayat visited East Pakistan about this time, arriving on 31 January shortly after Bhutto's departure from the provincial capital. He called on Mujib that very evening, who informed him that Bhutto was in league with the generals and 'had shown little interest in the constitutional proposals over which he was prepared to go along with him'.²²⁸ Mujib told Shaukat Hayat that the Six Points were not sacrosanct and suggested that West Pakistani politicians other than Bhutto visit Dhaka a few days before the Assembly and sit with the Awami League and hammer out a Constitution which Mujib would then announce publicly. He was suspicious that Bhutto's insistence that a prior agreement and settlement be made between the PPP and the Awami League was part of a conspiracy hatched at the instance of generals. He wanted Yahya Khan to display his honesty of intention by calling the Assembly on 15 March and confided that he was under extreme pressure. Shaukat Hayat states: '[Mujib] felt he would be in genuine difficulties, especially with the Naxalites and Communist inspired extremists, who might insist on passing a Constitution unilaterally should Yahya fail to honour his own legal framework order.' At the end of the meeting Mujib asked Shaukat Hayat to convey his willingness to negotiate the Constitution with West Pakistani politicians and his request to convene the Assembly on 15 March 1971. The same day Shaukat Hayat called on Governor Ahsan who also expressed his disillusionment with the junta, complaining that his advice to Yahya Khan was now being overruled by the junta's generals.²²⁹

²²⁷ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

²²⁸ Mujib's comments to Shaukat Hayat are corroborated by another authoritative source. Rao Farman Ali states that when he met Mujib shortly after Bhutto, 'Mujib told me there was no disagreement about the Six Points between them. The dispute that arose was about power-sharing in the new government.' Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

²²⁹ The elderly politician gives an interesting account of his visit to East Pakistan: Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *The Nation that Lost its Soul*, p. 295-304.

Upon his return to the west wing, Shaukat Hayat was frustrated in his unsuccessful attempts to meet with the President. Later he was to discover that he had been blocked at every opportunity by General Umar, the National Security Adviser. Eventually, Umar was to finally tell him that there was no point in his meeting Yahya Khan 'as the President's mind was [already] made up'.²³⁰ Umar had always been a close confederate of his superior General Hamid. One may be able to conclude that attempts were being made to isolate Yahya Khan from receiving any opinion contrary to those held by the leading 'Hawk' generals of the junta.

Akbar Bugti visited Mujib during this period as well. On his return to Karachi he dropped in for lunch at my place on 10 February when he gave me details of his trip to East Pakistan and about his meetings with Mujib. He brought along with him the newly elected Balochistan provincial chief of the Awami League, Muhammad Khan Raisani, as well as one of my relatives, Saif-ur-Rehman Khan Mazari. In Akbar Bugti's opinion Mujib was extremely conciliatory towards West Pakistani politicians in general (of course with the exception of Bhutto). My friend was, not surprisingly, extremely satisfied with Mujib's expressed commitment to uphold the concept of provincial autonomy for the minority provinces in Pakistan.

Soon after his return from Dhaka Bhutto engaged himself in solidifying his position within West Pakistan. Firstly, he dealt with the PPP members of the National and Provincial Assemblies and took an 'official' mandate from them to seek amendments to the Six Points from the Awami League. Then from 12 February 1971 onwards he single-mindedly pursued his strategy of denying Mujib access to any other West Pakistani political party. He held talks with Qayum Khan, Mufti Mahmood, Wali Khan and others. His ambition was to emerge as the spokesman for a combined front consisting of all major political parties of West Pakistan. He tried to persuade the various political leaders to develop a consensus on constitutional issues, which meant unanimity on amendments to the Six Points, and then unitedly opposing the transfer of power until the Awami League agreed to modify the Six Points according to their demands. Not only did Bhutto's attempt at rallying the West Pakistani politicians behind him fail, but his actions increased Awami League hostility towards him. Mujib had now become convinced that Bhutto had become the junta's stalking-horse and was 'creating conditions that would offer an excuse not to transfer power (the risk to Bhutto being minimal, since he would not gain power under present circumstances but might hope to if they were fundamentally changed)'.²³¹ Tragically, judging by the events that followed, Mujib might have been right.

²³⁰ Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *ibid.*, p. 304.

²³¹ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

Mujib had by his obduracy in publicly refusing to negotiate the Six Points, brought the nation to a precipice. The Six Points had originally been drafted by a number of Bengali intellectuals - a certain Dr Muzaffar Chaudhury is said to have played an important role in their formulation.²³² The drafters of the original Six Points first approached Nurul Amin. But finding him unresponsive, in February 1966 they then went to Mujib, who was at the time preparing to attend the Opposition gathering at Chaudhry Muhammad Ali's house at Lahore - called to provide a unified front against the Tashkent. Herbert Feldman sums up Mujib's reaction as follows: 'Seeing in the draft a crystallization of what he wanted but had not been able to enunciate so precisely, Mujib seized upon it and carried the proposals to Lahore'.²³³ A month later Mujib was in jail for vigorously propounding his newly found doctrine. By the time he was released three years later in 1969, the Six Points had become an unshakable credo of the Awami League. It was the base on which the Awami League launched their 1970 election campaign. The size of the victory effectively sealed the doors on Mujib's ability, even if that had been his original intention, to compromise on the Six Points. He had by now become a hostage to the hardliners in his party who were stridently demanding the imposition of the Six Point Programme in its totality.²³⁴ By January 1971 their demands were made vociferously and in public. On 20 January 1971 at a public meeting in Paltan Maidan Nur-e-Alam Siddique, the leader of the student front of the Awami League (East Pakistan Students League), declared that '...the student community would not tolerate [the] slightest deviation from the 11-point student and the Six-Point programmes in the future Constitution of the country. The meeting also gave a word of caution to the elected representatives that they would be pushed out of Bengal if the people's mandate was betrayed in the framing of the Constitution.'²³⁵

At the same meeting an Awami League MNA and former student leader, Muhammad Ali insisted that '...he would not accept any Constitution that did not contain each and every provision of the Six Point and Eleven Point Programmes. He assured the cheering crowd that if necessary he along with his colleagues would walk out from the Parliament and join the masses in a struggle for attaining the rights of 70 million people.'²³⁶ The stringent speeches Mujib made after the elections decisively committing himself to the Six Points programme can also be seen in another light. While combating what he feared was a conspiracy to deprive his parliamentary majority party from fulfilling its mandate, he was also carefully safeguarding his position as the leader of

²³² *Morning News* Karachi, 18 January 1974. Dr M. A. Chaudhry was of the Department of Political Science at the Dhaka University during the 1971 crisis.

²³³ Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

²³⁴ In January 1971 Choudhury Sir Zafarulla Khan met Mujib and asked Awami League leader some pertinent questions on the implications of the Six Point plan, and whether some of the demands were actually realistic or feasible. In return all Mujib could offer was a 'quizzical smile': Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, *The Agony of Pakistan*, Kent Publications, 1974, pp. 127-8.

²³⁵ Syed Humayun, *Sheikh Mujib's 6-Point Formula*, Royal Book Com Karachi, 1995, p. 345.

²³⁶ Syed Humayun, *op. cit.*, p. 345-6.

the Awami Party. The Six Point formula had become a political noose around Mujib's neck.

As events would show, Mujib too wished for a way out of the impasse. He was wary of the ultimate aims of the Army junta and viewed Bhutto as an overly ambitious conspirator. Mujib observed in early February, 'Pakistan's politics is politics of conspiracy and intrigue. Conspiracy has yet not stopped, it is still going on.'²³⁷ He was clearly convinced that the only way to achieve his aims was an early meeting of the National Assembly. If one wishes to give him the benefit of doubt, it is possible to surmise that once the Assembly met, Mujib felt that his position as prime minister would prove sufficient to overawe the extremists within his own party. He would then have the opportunity to meet with other West Pakistani politicians and come to an acceptable arrangement.²³⁸ Until then he was a hostage to his own supporters.

During the first week of February Yahya Khan had invited Mujib and some of his associates to Islamabad as his personal guests. According to General Farman Ali, who was then in charge of political affairs in the east wing, Mujib had invited Yahya Khan during his January visit to his house for a meal. Yahya Khan had declined the invitation. Later, when the Awami League leader learnt of Yahya Khan's extended stay at Bhutto's house at Larkana, Mujib became incensed. He took it as a personal snub and angrily told Farman Ali, 'Does Yahya Khan take us to be his inferiors!' Affronted by this presumed insult, he turned down Yahya Khan's invitation on the pretext that he was busy with party meetings until 18 February. Later he was persuaded by others including Farman Ali to change his mind. Mujib announced that he would travel to Islamabad on 19 February.²³⁹

Mujib's earlier refusal had provoked a telegram expressing dissatisfaction with his refusal and threatened him 'with serious consequences that would follow'. The telegram was sent to Governor Ahsan with instructions to read it out in person to Mujib in the presence of General Yakub Khan, the Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan. Mujib had been called to the governor's office, and as the men gathered and prepared to read out Islamabad's message, a call came from the President's House in Islamabad instructing the Governor to withhold the contents of the message. Later he was ordered to burn the telegram.²⁴⁰ This episode helps to illustrate Yahya Khan's indecisiveness under the growing pressure of the junta generals. On this occasion, it appears common sense seemed to have prevailed. A few days later, on 13 February, the President announced that the National Assembly would meet at Dhaka on 3 March 1971. In a later

²³⁷ *Dawn*, 10 February 1971.

²³⁸ On 21 February 1971 Mujib met with Mufti Mahmood and Maulana Hazarvi of the JUI in Dhaka and told them that once the Assembly met, the Awami League would be responsive in the constitution making process to the interests and suggestions of the members from the province of West Pakistan: *Pakistan Times*, 22 February 1971.

²³⁹ Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

²⁴⁰ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

interview Yahya Khan stated that this decision was made by him because he had been warned that East Pakistan was set to politically erupt on 21 February, or 'Shaheed' (Martyr's) Day if a date was not set for the Assembly meeting.²⁴¹

The Awami League openly expressed its pleasure at the news. The hardline Secretary General of Awami League, Tajuddin, indicated that the League would continue to seek consensus with other parties and that he was 'more than optimistic' about the ultimate success of the quest'.²⁴² At the same time Mujib assured his party members that the Six Points were now public property and not susceptible to 'adjustment and expansion'.²⁴³ It seems they were sending two signals of reassurance, one to West Pakistan and the other to their supporters. The contradiction may be explainable by the nature of Mujib's predicament. Some chose to believe him. others such as the 'Hawk' generals of the junta had already concluded that he was simply a compulsive liar.

Driven by his devouring appetite for political power, Bhutto declared that unless there was an understanding between Mujib and himself on the future Constituent Assembly, it would not be allowed to meet. He desperately craved a position of authority²⁴⁴ and would have eagerly accepted the post of deputy prime minister, president or even foreign minister. His forthcoming role as the leader of the Opposition in a new democratic system held little appeal for him. Even one of his young devotees confessed: 'Perhaps another politician with more moral scruple and with a greater respect for democracy would have bowed before the will of the majority and quietly entered the Constituent Assembly to debate the future of Pakistan. Bhutto, however, possessed none of these gentle characteristics. He never had much faith in the parliamentary process.'²⁴⁵

After much bombastic rhetoric and rage vented in public, Bhutto ever hopeful, left the door open to Mujib for compromise indicating that he would accept any assurance, even through private channels, that there would be a role for him in the future system.²⁴⁶ When no offers were made by the Awami League his political onslaught intensified. On 17 February, he announced that any attempts to mediate and arbitrate would only complicate matters, and therefore, there was no further room for negotiations with the Awami League. He further declared that a National Assembly

²⁴¹ Yahya Khan, interviewed by M. D. Tahir and Iftikhar Ahmed, (Reprinted in) *Daily Khabarain*, 14 July 1995. ('Shohid' day commemorated the death of a large number of students at the Dhaka University campus as they demonstrated for the adoption of Bengali as a national language of Pakistan on 21 February 1952. The day acquired a hallowed significance among Bengali nationalists.)

²⁴² *Dawn*, 15 February 1971.

²⁴³ *Pakistan Observer*, 16 February 1971.

²⁴⁴ Yahya Khan was once told by Muzaffar Qizalbash, his Cabinet min that he had been informed by a 'foreigner' (presumed to be the Shah of Iran) that if Bhutto did not get power within three years he would go stark raving mad: Yahya Interview (Reprint), *Daily Khabarain*, July 1995.

²⁴⁵ S. Taseer, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

²⁴⁶ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

meeting in Dhaka would be a 'slaughter house' for West Pakistanis.²⁴⁷ Ironically, Bhutto should have been the last person to express concern for the well-being of West Pakistani MNAs, as ten days later he himself threatened to 'break the legs' of any MNA from the West Wing who dared venture to Dhaka for the Assembly meeting. The 'slaughter house' speech infuriated Mujib. He cancelled his plans to visit Islamabad at the very last moment, announcing that if Dhaka is a 'slaughter house' for West Pakistanis then Islamabad is a 'slaughter house' for Bengalis.²⁴⁸ This decision of Mujib's would have grave repercussions for the future as it led to Yahya Khan becoming seriously embittered towards him.

On 18 February Yahya Khan had summoned Bhutto. During their talks the President maintained that he chided Bhutto for his refusal to attend the Assembly meeting and for inflaming the political scenario with his agitation. He ordered him to desist. Bhutto, according to Yahya Khan, listened to him without saying much, and ignored his instructions completely. Yahya Khan later asserted that Bhutto's refusal to attend the Assembly meeting was the single most contributory factor to the breakup of the country, adding that 'Bhutto's incendiary speeches were more dangerous for the unity of Pakistan than any ever made by Mujib'.²⁴⁹ As these comments of Yahya Khan's were made six years later, much of Yahya Khan's bitterness towards Bhutto can be interpreted by some to be a result of the ill treatment he received at Bhutto's hands during the interim years, but his insistence that he persevered with Bhutto to attend the Assembly meeting cannot be ignored.

Yahya Khan seemed to be doing his best to resolve the situation, but he no longer had a free hand. From the moment he had taken charge of the country in March 1969, he had operated within a collective leadership, reserving the role of *primus inter pares* for himself. After his return from Dhaka in January, his position had become considerably weakened. The 'Hawks' within the junta had decided that Mujib was not to be trusted further and had adopted a malevolent stance towards the Bengali leader. When Yahya Khan learnt of Mujib's refusal to come to Islamabad, he summoned Farman Ali to Islamabad, who reached there on 20 February. According to Farman Ali, as he stood up to salute Yahya Khan who entered the room, the President burst out, 'Til fix this bastard Mujib.' Farman Ali states that he advised the President that, 'The man you are referring to happens to be the elected majority leader of the country. Locking him up will not solve anything.' To this Yahya Khan angrily responded, 'Who does this bastard think he is? Why didn't he come?' Farman Ali remains" convinced to this day that it was at this stage that Yahya Khan violently changed his mind about Mujib. The military solution so avidly recommended by his junta generals had now become a sudden reality.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ *Dawn*, 18 February 1971.

²⁴⁸ Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

²⁴⁹ Yahya Khan Interview (Reprint), *Daily Khabarain*. 14 July 1995.

²⁵⁰ Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*.

If one views what followed with this event in mind they become easier to fathom. During meetings with his elected party men on 20 and 21 February, Bhutto took an ante-dated resignation from every PPP member elected to the National Assembly. In addition, these persons bound themselves by oath to obey his instructions. In reality these resignations had no value as the LFO had stipulated that resignation was possible only after the Assembly had met and the Speaker appointed. The very same day (20 February) the LFO was amended with immediate effect allowing elected members to resign before the Assembly met. The coincidence was too obvious, and was a clear example of collusion between Bhutto and members of the junta. Shortly afterwards Yahya Khan and his junta began applying pressure on other West Pakistani politicians to join Bhutto in boycotting the Assembly meeting.²⁵¹ Qayum Khan, who had a history of following each and every government's diktat, was the only one to succumb. The rest displayed surprising resistance and insisted on journeying to Dhaka. Having failed to unite all the West Pakistani MNAs in a boycott of the Assembly the junta now resolved to postpone the scheduled meeting on 3 March.

As Bhutto ranted '*Idhur Hum, Uddhur Tum* [we are here, you are there]'²⁵² Yahya Khan and his general's moved one step closer to the crisis. They had begun steps to arrange the pretext that as the majority of the West Pakistani Assembly members would not be attending the Assembly session, there was little point in holding the meeting of the Assembly. G. W. Choudhury informs us that the President then asked him to prepare a conciliatory statement announcing the postponement of the Assembly meeting. The draft that Choudhury prepared attempted to mollify the East Pakistanis, but Yahya Khan 'gave it to Pirzada, who, in alliance with Bhutto, torpedoed it'.²⁵³ Instead, later, a more provocative statement tersely announced the postponement on the radio. After hearing the news Herbert Feldman commented: 'It was noted in both wings that the new decisions had not been broadcast by Yahya Khan himself but that a statement had simply been read to the nation by a radio announcer. It was asked whether these decisions had been forced on Yahya Khan and made in spite of him, or whether the method of delivery was simply cavalier.'²⁵⁴

Regarding the 'Hawk' generals, Peerzada, who was the Principal Staff Officer to the President and the so-called 'Prime Minister', had aligned himself to Bhutto at an earlier

²⁵¹ One example was the Council Muslim League. According to Shauk Hayat, General Umar had instructed the leadership of the party to boycott the Assembly meeting which led to dramatic confrontations within the party hierarchy. With the generals' flatterers such as Choudhry Zahoor Ellahi exchanging hot words with him: Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

²⁵² Given the prevailing circumstances, '*Idhitr hum, uddhnr tum*' implied 'We are the majority party in West Pakistan and you are the majority in East Pakistan.' Interestingly, in his article in *The Muslim* (Islamabad, 15 December 1992) Dr. Aftab Ahmed insists that the words were never uttered by Bhutto, but, in fact, coined by Abbas Athar, the news editor of *Azad* who specialized in condensing speeches and newsworthy events into banner headlines for his newspaper.

²⁵³ G. W. Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

²⁵⁴ Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

stage. Peerzada's rival and the senior most ranking general after Yahya Khan, was the Chief of Army Staff, General Hamid Khan. Hamid had not viewed Bhutto favorably, until after the December 1970 elections. Among his objections to Bhutto would have included his suspicions of Bhutto's close links with his adversary Peerzada. Hamid's antagonism towards Mujib would now lead him to perceiving Bhutto as a common ally. General Umar, an active 'Hawk', was a close associate of Hamid's and followed his preference to utilize Bhutto. Major-General Akbar, Chief of Military Intelligence, was also known to be 'advocating a hard line against Awami League'.²⁵⁵ General Mitha was known to have assiduously kept close connections with General Hamid, and therefore was the last remaining 'Hawk'. The only exception, other than Yahya Khan himself, was Gul Hassan. As Chief of General Staff he was occupied with Army affairs and seems to have maintained a strictly military posture until his rebellion against the junta at the end of the debacle.

For months Yahya Khan had come under overwhelming pressure from his colleagues. Generals Hamid, Peerzada, Umar, Mitha and Akbar. Now in the latter days of February, the President had become a convert to their cause. On 20 February the LFO (as mentioned earlier) was amended to suit Bhutto. The next day the civilian Cabinet, which one senior general referred to as 'a bunch of smart alecks - an unnecessary bottleneck to efficient administration', was dismissed.²⁵⁶ On 22 February at a meeting held by Yahya Khan, the first overt mention of postponement of Assembly arose. The meeting was attended by members of the junta, the two governors, the senior martial law administrators and heads of military and civilian intelligence services. Admiral Ahsan, Governor East Pakistan, put up a judicious and valiant defence. The Governor advised the President that the reaction in the east to postponement would be adverse and immediate. Public order would be difficult to maintain. He pointed out that members of the provincial service and police were largely Bengali, as were the majority of the East Pakistan Rifles. Many of them supported the Awami League and those that did not would be too frightened to resist. Once the politics turned into the streets, Ahsan insisted, the situation would become untenable. The participants of street politics would not be as dedicated as the political elite to the integrity of the State. Doomed to be ignored like a Cassandra, Admiral Ahsan warned the gathered mediocrity of generals of the disaster that loomed before them.

On the morning of 23 February Admiral Ahsan called Farman Ali for a meeting. He stated:

General Yakub Khan [Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan] was sitting there with Admiral Ahsan. It looked as if they had not slept the whole night.

²⁵⁵ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose. *op. cit.*, p. 108. During a meeting in February with Admiral Ahsan at Dhaka (in General Farman Ali's presence) General Akbar announced that: 'We will not allow these bastards to rule over us': Rao Farman Ali. *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

²⁵⁶ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

They told me that the National Assembly session had been postponed. I told them that this would now lead to major agitation and army action was bound to follow. Both his seniors agreed with him. Admiral Ahsan then decided to write an urgent handwritten note to the President warning him that this action would eventually lead to the Indians becoming directly involved in East Pakistan. Upon receiving the note Yahya Khan immediately summoned Ahsan. The President informed Ahsan that he agreed with the views expressed in his note. Yahya Khan then told Ahsan to meet with Bhutto and try and convince him to turn up at Dacca.²⁵⁷

Admiral Ahsan and General Yakub Khan visited Karachi on a desperate mission to persuade Bhutto to change his mind and attend the Dhaka Assembly meeting. It has been reported that Yahya Khan went as far as to offer a solemn promise that if the Awami League attempted to unilaterally impose the Constitution, the President would immediately prorogue the Assembly.²⁵⁸ These efforts were to no avail. Banking on the fact that the generals of the junta were with him rather than Yahya Khan, the man remained fixated on his own ambitions.

* * *

On 27 February 1971 I had invited a number of the independently elected MNAs for a meeting to my house at Karachi. Among those who came included Saeed-ur-Rasheed Abassi and Mian Nizamuddin Haider both from Bahawalpur, Makhdoom Noor Muhammad from Rahimyar Khan, Haji Moula Buksh Soomro from Shikarpur and Maulana Zafar Ahmed Ansari. At our meeting we came to a united decision that we would all go to Dhaka to attend the National Assembly session. At the same time we expressed our concern at the manner in which the military government was handling the political crisis in East Pakistan. Unfortunately Yahya Khan's sudden announcement a few days later postponing the Assembly session put an end to our plan but nevertheless we soon resolved to travel to Dhaka whenever a future date was set for the inaugural session of the Assembly.

A few days later on the evening of 2 March 1971, I received unexpected visitors. They were two old Aitchisonian friends of mine, Nawabzada Sadiq Qureshi and his brother Naseem. Sadiq tried his best to convince me to join the PPP. He also informed me that he had been sent by Zulfikar Bhutto to extend an invitation to meet with him that very same evening. Initially I was hesitant to accept this almost last minute invitation sent through a third party, but at the same time I found it difficult to say no to Sadiq Qureshi. Bhutto seemed to have chosen his emissary for this mission with some foresight. Sensing my predicament, Sadiq spoke to Bhutto over the telephone, who then

²⁵⁷ Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

²⁵⁸ Syed Humayun, *Sheikh Mujib's 6-Point Formula*, op. cit., p. 353.

asked to speak with me to personally invite me over to his house. Later I accompanied Sadiq to 70 Clifton. We were received at the door by Ghulam Mustafa Khar. Inside I found Bhutto seated near the staircase. There were a number of his PPP men sitting alongside; they included Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Rafi Raza and a few others whom I cannot now recall.

The postponement of the Assembly had been announced by Yahya Khan two days earlier and I found Bhutto basking in pleasure with the way events had taken their course. He now wished to persuade me once more to join his party. According to him my brother Mir Balakh Sher had already made a commitment with him to join the PPP in the near future, and suggested that I would be wise to follow in his footsteps. As the provincial government of Punjab would be a PPP one, he intimated that it would be very much in my interests to become a party member. I listened to his discourse patiently. He was always very persuasive when he wanted to be. He then told me that if the president should decide to schedule some future date for an Assembly session, he then expected of me, as a friend of his, to refuse to visit Dhaka. My reply was different to what he wished to hear. I told him that I was committed to attending the session of the National Assembly because I believed it to be the most sensible and honorable way of resolving the crisis which had developed in the relationship between the two wings of the country. A short while later, as he was in the middle of an expansive oration to convince me otherwise, his servant, Babu, interrupted the proceedings with the information that General Umar was on the telephone for Bhutto. A few minutes later Bhutto returned wearing a smug expression on his face. He did not reveal the precise nature of the call, but told me within everyone's hearing: 'You can forget about the possibility of ever travelling to Dhaka for an Assembly meeting. That is all over now and done with.'

At the time I was not totally convinced about the telephone call; knowing Bhutto, as I did, I thought it might have been a simulated sham to impress me with his Junta connections - no more than yet another attempt at luring me to join the PPP. Resort to such artifices were not unknown to Bhutto. But with the benefit of hindsight, it does seem certain that Umar had spoken with him. For Bhutto to have been so sure that the Assembly would not meet in Dhaka could only mean that he had been informed in advance of the Junta's plans for a military crack-down in East Pakistan. If that was the case, then it would go a long way towards proving that Bhutto's trip to Dhaka twenty days later was part of a premeditated plan between the generals and him to ruin any chance of an agreement being reached between Yahya and Mujib. The role designated for Bhutto would then have been one of a spoiler. One might even go as far as to suggest that the on-off negotiations between Yahya and Mujib had been permitted by the Junta simply to keep the Awami League off guard, thereby gaining time to fly in a sufficient number of troops for the crackdown.

Having made the announcement of his telephone call from Umar, Bhutto once more began his attempt to win me over to his side. Speaking rather derogatively of the assembled PPP leaders, he announced loudly that all of them had been elected on his coat-tails. Then turning his charm on me, he intimated that he needed people like me close beside him for the days ahead. I politely listened to his speech knowing very well that as an independently-elected MNA, Bhutto valued my joining the PPP in his quest to get greater representation within the National Assembly. I had no desire to join Bhutto.

On 8 March, only six days later, another attempt was made at convincing me to join the PPP. This time it was in my family town of Rojhan. On that day my brother Mir Balakh Sher, visited me and told me that his friend Nasrullah Drishak, the newly elected Rajanpur MPA from the local Mazari Group, had arrived at Rojhan and was waiting to meet with me.²⁵⁹ My brother took me to meet with Nasrullah. During the meeting I was told by Nasrullah that both my brother and he had been told by Bhutto that General Yahya had committed himself to letting the PPP form the government at the Centre as Mujib was neither trusted nor acceptable to the Army Junta. My brother and Nasrullah now sought to convince me that as Bhutto had a majority in the Punjab and his PPP would soon be forming a government in our province, it was in our interest to join the party and have a share in the Punjab government. By then I had learnt that Bhutto had called oh my brother at his house in Lahore and had lunch with him. He had spent some five hours with my brother Mir Balakh Sher, during the course of which Bhutto told him that with the exception of nine or ten people his PPP comprised complete asses.²⁶⁰ The PPP leader told my brother that he was in dire need of getting the right kind of men to join his party. Flattery apart, as the PPP already had a majority in Punjab, winning over my brother Mir Balakh Sher and his associate Nasrullah Drishak, who had both been elected to the Punjab Assembly, was not such a priority for Bhutto as was the case of getting me a newly-elected MNA. The PPP clearly needed as many members for the National Assembly as possible. At the end of their meeting my brother made a commitment to Bhutto that he and Nasrullah Drishak would soon be joining the PPP, and that he would also persuade me to do likewise. This was apparently the commitment Bhutto had referred to when I had met with him on 2 March.

In Rojhan when my brother told me that he had already made a commitment to Bhutto on behalf of all of us, I told him that both he and Nasrullah Drishak could do as they wished but that I would never join the PPP. I made my reasons plain to both of them saying that I could not accept the stand Bhutto had taken against the elected majority leader of Pakistan. Whether we liked Mujib or not, if we believed in democratic

²⁵⁹ The Secretary House was originally constructed as a residential building in Rojhan by my paternal uncle Mir Dost Muhammad Khan to provide accommodation for his Private Secretary Choudhury Rahmat Ali in the early 1920s. In more recent years it has been used as a guest house and a place to hold private meetings away from the public eye.

²⁶⁰ The Urdu word he used was *ghaddas*.

parliamentary principles we had to accept his man as the prime minister of the country. Any other course of action, in my opinion, would not only be unprincipled and undemocratic, but would also lead to a potential national catastrophe. My other reason against joining the PPP was more personal. I told them that I could never place my trust with a man like Bhutto. My decision was final. Unfortunately, as a result of this rather unilateral decision on my part, my relationship with my brother once more went into a decline.

Over the months I had been greatly dismayed by the turn of national events. My sympathies lay with the ideals of democracy. In my view the Awami League had won a clear majority to govern the country and no one had the right to dictate terms to them. Even if, as opponents of Mujib insisted, the Bengalis wished to form a separate country, then as a democratic majority they were well within their rights to do so. It could not be termed as secession. Secession by its very definition means a break-away from the majority wishes of a nation. The Bengalis were in a clear majority and their claim that they had been badly neglected was valid in my view. Even in the 1950s East Pakistanis had complained about the West Pakistani leadership in vociferous terms. It is worth recalling that as early as 1954 a Bengali representative speaking in the National Assembly articulated the mood of his people by stating:

Sir, I...yesterday...said that the attitude of the Muslim League coterie here was one of contempt towards East Bengal, towards its culture, its language, its literature and everything concerning East Bengal... In fact, Sir, I tell you that far from considering East Bengal as an equal partner, the leaders of the Muslim League thought that we were a subject race and they belonged to the race of conquerors.²⁶¹

The hostility generated by Awami League's Six Points in the west wing could perhaps be understood but was largely misconceived. The depth of Bengali hatred for the existing political set-up had to be resolved without recourse to bloodshed. The idea of an armed intervention by the military was to my mind courting disaster. The Six Point's devolution of power from the centre to the provinces did not necessarily mean an end of the sovereign state of Pakistan, but for those who had undemocratically dominated the affairs of the State, it meant their extinction. Shortly after Mr. Jinnah's death the bureaucracy, and later the military-bureaucratic alliance, had kept the reins of power in the country. Self-appointed, these people had made themselves the arbiters of the nation's destiny, and insisted on dictating to the people what they claimed was best for them. After twenty-three years of nationhood we found ourselves at crossroads yet again. The military-bureaucratic leadership had failed. It was time, I believed, to re-examine the existing structure and if necessary alter it completely to accommodate the

²⁶¹ *Constituent Assembly Debates*, vol. vii, no. 6, p. 183; quoted in Her Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

wishes of the majority of the people. Failure to come to terms with the Awami League boded calamity for the country.

Implementation of the Six Points in their original form could only have ended with two possible results. With its strict provincial taxation and foreign affairs clauses, it would have rendered the central government close to unworkable. This would have either led to an eventual compromise or a peaceful parting of ways between the two wings. The compromise would have led to a weaker central government exercising its limited authority within the confines of the new Constitution under an Awami League government. The reality of actual governance would have forced the Awami League to change its Six Points by tempering some of its more extreme concepts. On the other hand if the Awami League government showed no interest in managing the affairs of the west wing, then the West Pakistanis could have peacefully broken away from the majority. The likelihood of the Awami League forcing unity on West Pakistan was non-existent. Not only would they have been wholly uninterested, the Army which would have been called to perform this imaginary task, was a wholly West Pakistani entity.

* * *

To deal with the expected disturbances following the postponement of the Assembly meeting, the junta's first batch of troop reinforcements began arriving in Dhaka late in the afternoon of 27 February, and by 2 March a two battalion brigade had been sent to East Pakistan.²⁶² Communications between Rawalpindi and Dhaka came to an abrupt halt during the last few days of February, and Governor Ahsan and his men had no knowledge of what was transpiring in the Martial Law GHQ. Upon his return to Dhaka Ahsan informed Mujib that Yahya Khan was under tremendous pressure to postpone the Assembly, and urged him to go to Rawalpindi to help break the deadlock.²⁶³ Though visibly shaken, Mujib replied that an overture from him at this stage would make little difference and instead might give the vested groups in the west wing a belief that their strategies against him were working. Admiral Ahsan sent messages to Yahya Khan to intercede personally and resolve the situation, because if the Assembly meeting was postponed, the outbreak of violence would be beyond the control of the civil administration in the east wing. On the evening of 28 February Ahsan called Mujib and his close advisers to his residence to inform him that the president was going to announce the postponement of the Assembly the following day. Mujib privately pleaded with governor that a new date for the reconvening of the Assembly be given in the announcement. He said he needed some flexibility with which to handle the reaction to the announcement otherwise it would be beyond his control. Farman Ali who was present at the meeting recalls:

²⁶² Lt.-General Gul Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

²⁶³ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

The Governor, General Yakub and I represented the government side and Mujib brought along Tajuddin Ahmed and Kamal Hossain. Tajuddin told us that he knew about the postponement in advance. According to him, The West Pakistanis would never let us come into government. So we will have to find ourselves another way to get power.' Mujib tried to calm him down by saying to him, 'Speak with a cool head.' It was a very sad meeting resembling a funeral. Mujib later sent his companions outside and then told us, 'For God's sake get me a new date for the Assembly meeting. Even now I can control some of my people.' Mujib was begging for a new date for the meeting. If one applied Bhutto's test [the one he had suggested to Yahya Khan as a test for Mujib's intentions] then Mujib proved to be a patriot otherwise [as the troops from West Pakistan had yet to arrive at this stage] there was nothing to stop him from announcing the creation of Bangladesh.²⁶⁴

Ahsan sent an urgent telex to Yahya Khan who was then at Karachi saying: 'I beg you even at this late hour to give a new date for the summoning of the Assembly and not to postpone it sine die, otherwise ... we will have reached the point of no return.'²⁶⁵ Within half an hour Admiral Ahsan received his reply. He had been sacked from his position as Governor of East Pakistan. The 'Hawk' generals and Bhutto had won. The generals were certain that superior brute force would win the day in East Pakistan. On the other hand, Bhutto probably seemed not to care what happened as long as his route to power remained free of obstacles. Ruefully reflecting on these state of events Yahya Khan was to later say, 'Even at this late stage Mujib proved to a better *mohib-e-watan* [patriot] than Bhutto ever could have been.'²⁶⁶

* * *

The reaction to the postponement of the Assembly was worse than anticipated. Central authority in the eastern province collapsed completely and government offices ceased to function. The strict censorship laws went unheeded and curfews were purposefully violated. The curfew violations led to shooting in which both army jawans and Bengali civilians were killed. Units of the Pakistan Army found themselves unable to control the public upsurge of resentment. Soon, according to one senior army officer, the authority of the Martial Law Administrator 'extended no further than his Headquarters.'²⁶⁷ In the power vacuum that had been created by the speed of events, the Awami League assumed authority. On 3 March, the day the Assembly was to have convened, a *hartal* announced by the Awami League brought the province to a state of paralysis. East Pakistan became cut off from the world. All commercial activity, railways, airlines and even the courts, ceased to operate.

²⁶⁴ Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996. pp. 26-31.

²⁶⁵ Richiyd Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

²⁶⁶ Yahya Khan Interview (Reprint), *Daily Khabarain*, 14 July 1995.

²⁶⁷ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

In the morning of 3 March the Governor and Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan, General Yakub Khan sent an urgent message to Yahya Khan insisting that he visit Dhaka and negotiate directly with Mujib. When General Peerzada telephoned him to tell him that the president would not be coming, Yakub chose the only honourable option available to him and resigned from both his offices.²⁶⁸ At a mass rally held on the same day Mujib had announced that all forms of violence should cease and urged his countrymen to conduct a Gandhian satyagraha. He also spoke for communal harmony between Bengali and non-Bengali and between Muslims and Hindus. Within two days, by 5 March, the troops stationed at Dhaka were able to return to their barracks as a result of this call for nonviolent resistance. The response to Mujib's appeal had been complete. Life in the province was at a total standstill, even 'the judges, the quintessential symbol of national authority, went on strike and General Tikka Khan, the new governor, could find no one to swear him into office'.²⁶⁹

A little over a fortnight later I had a chance meeting with General Yakub Khan. My friend Syed Asad Ali had invited a few people over for a dinner held in honor of Lady MacFarquar, the widow of a senior British civil servant. The General was one of the guests invited to the function. I had known Yakub Khan since his days as a Brigadier in the early 1950s at Quetta. He was also an old boy of my cadet college at Dehra Doon, RIMC. Along with Admiral Ahsan, whom I held in great respect, General Yakub was a man of integrity. At the time one could only hazard a guess at the reasons for his recent resignation from the highest of posts in the Eastern Wing. Knowing the man I believed he must have had a very good reason for doing so, but in the circumstances it was not appropriate to inquire. During the course of the evening General Yakub provided a detailed study of the conditions that existed in East Pakistan at the time. It made for very depressing hearing. The chasm that I had believed to be bridgeable had widened even further.

After Yakub Khan's resignation, Farman Ali was summoned to Islamabad. Prior to his departure he went to see Mujib on the night of 4 March. Recollecting, he states:

²⁶⁸ Farman Ali recalls: On 4 March General Yakub Khan, General Khadim Ali and I had returned from the airport after seeing Admiral Ahsan off and were sitting for lunch when the phone rang. It was Peerzada calling for Yakub, ... [After some discussion on the phone] Yakub said to Peerzada, 'You then better accept my resignation.' Simultaneously General Khadim Ali and I informed Yakub that he also advise Peerzada of their resignations as well but by that time he had hung up on the telephone. The decision to take military action had now taken place and none of us agreed with this decision (Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31). On 5 March 1971 in his written message confirming his resignation to Peerzada, General Yakub included the following words, 'a ... military solution ... would mean civil war and large scale killing of unarmed civilians and would achieve no sane aim. It would have disastrous consequences.' General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, Oxford, Karachi 1995, p. 24.

For his clear foresight Yakub was demoted to the rank of Major-General and forcibly retired.

²⁶⁹ David Loshak, *Pakistan Crisis*, McGraw Hill, New York, 1971, p. Tikka Khan was later sworn on 9 April 1971 much after the military's brutal crack-down.

I went to meet Mujib in a small nondescript car along with a driver. The whole city of Dacca was under the control of the Awami League. At the manned checkpoints the Bengalis had set up I was recognized and permitted to go through. On meeting Mujib I asked him can Pakistan be saved. He replied, 'Why not? Of course it can be saved.' I noticed a shadow outside from a gap in the door and assumed that our conversation was being eavesdropped. I pointed this out to Mujib but he rejected my suspicions, but when he looked out of the door he found Tajuddin standing there. Mujib invited Tajuddin in ... Tajuddin also answered my question by saying: 'Pakistan can be saved providing there were two separate meetings held of the National Assembly. One in the East Wing, the other in the West.' I told him that this would in reality mean two separate countries. Tajuddin replied that, 'We cannot sit under the same roof with the "Number One" killer of Bengalis.' He was referring to Bhutto. I can offer no proof of this but in those days everyone in East Pakistan held a similar view.

The next day when Farman Ali arrived in Islamabad he went to the President's House to answer Yahya Khan's summons:

When I left Dacca Urdu speaking citizens were being slaughtered in the streets and shops were being set alight. The government control had collapsed completely. Overwrought with the looming disaster in East Pakistan I arrived in the capital and went to the President's House where I was taken to small veranda where sitting alongside a long table where Yahya Khan was sitting barefooted with General Hamid and Bhutto. The three of them were looking relaxed and chatting over glasses filled with whisky. I was totally taken aback and shocked by this display of unfeeling behavior. With half of Pakistan ablaze witnessing their indifference my thoughts immediately went to the days of Rome and Nero. Yahya asked me, 'What is the situation in Dacca?' I replied that I wished to brief the President in private, whereupon Bhutto picked his whisky and went to an adjacent room. I then informed Yahya that. The Bengalis regard Bhutto as being responsible for the current turn of events and refer to him as the number one killer of the Bengalis. The situation is now clearly beyond the Six Points issue...²⁷⁰

Later that evening Farman Ali who had been invited to dinner by the president, came across a Yahya Khan livid with rage. He had come to know of General Yakub's resignation and accused him of desertion in the face of duty, and instructed General Hamid who was present, to prepare for a case of court martial against all the officers involved including Farman Ali. In the end it turned out to be no more than a case of drunken bluster.

²⁷⁰ Rao Farman Ali, *Takbeer*, 11 January 1996, pp. 26-31.

Earlier on 3 March, after consulting with Bhutto, Yahya Khan had called for a conference of all party leaders in Dhaka on 10 March, followed with a convening of the Assembly a fortnight or so later. This invitation had been rejected by Mujib who, already convinced that the Assembly meeting's postponement had been arranged by Bhutto in collusion with the junta, was now suspicious and resentful about the fact that the Awami League, unlike the PPP, had not been consulted in advance about the conference.²⁷¹ To end the stalemate Yahya Khan made a speech on 6 March announcing that the inaugural session of the Assembly would now take place on 25 March. At the same time he insisted that his decision to postpone the Assembly had been 'completely misunderstood' and indicated that the impasse was a consequence of misunderstandings between the major parties and criticized the Awami League for allowing 'destructive elements' into 'the streets and destroying life and property'. Yahya Khan's speech ended on a note of warning, 'I will not allow a handful of people to destroy the homeland of millions of innocent Pakistanis. It is the duty of the Pakistan Armed Forces to ensure the integrity, solidarity and security of Pakistan, a duty in which they have never failed.'²⁷² The threat of the military option had now been made clear.

Mujib's reply came at a public meeting, a massive rally held at the Ramna Race Course, on 7 March. He announced that he would not attend the National Assembly meeting scheduled for 25 March unless four of his demands had been met. These demands were:

1. withdrawal of Martial Law;
2. return of all military personnel to their barracks;
3. an enquiry into the recent shootings and killings in East Pakistan; and,
4. an immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people.

Martial Law authorities prevented Mujib's speech from being broadcast on the radio. Consequently, the employees of Radio Pakistan Dhaka went on strike and all radio transmission went off the air. The transmission only resumed the next day with the playing of Mujib's taped speech.²⁷³ The authorities had become largely helpless as by now the Awami League was running a parallel *de facto* government.

²⁷¹ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

²⁷² *Dawn*, 7 March 1971.

²⁷³ *The Pakistan Observer*, 9 March 1971.

With the outbreak of violence in East Pakistan, Bhutto had been subjected to criticism and attempts were made to 'discredit him as being a main contributor to the impasse'.²⁷⁴ Caught on the defensive and faced with the prospect of the Assembly meeting scheduled for 25 March, Bhutto sent a telegram to Mujib on 10 March offering to visit Dhaka to recommence their talks. The Awami League by this time had concluded that Bhutto was not to be trusted and ignored his offer. Rebuffed, Bhutto now openly demanded that, 'if power were to be transferred to the people before any constitutional settlement as demanded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, it should be transferred to the majority party in East Pakistan and the Majority party here [in West Pakistan]'.²⁷⁵ In a subsequent statement the following day, Bhutto went a step further by declaring that 'in a situation faced by Pakistan, having a geographical distance between two parts, the rule of majority did not apply'.²⁷⁶ In refusing to acknowledge the basic principle of majority rule, Bhutto was prepared to invert the laws of democracy simply to suit his quest for power.

Earlier, on 13 March Mufti Mahmood had called together a meeting of the smaller political parties of West Pakistan. The meeting was attended by representatives of Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Islam, Jamaat-i-Islami, Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Pakistan, Council Muslim League and Convention Muslim League. Wali Khan's National Awami Party was not represented, but the conference had its backing. These parties had earlier been prepared to attend the 3 March Assembly meeting, successfully resisting the junta's pressure and the pleas and threats of Bhutto and his PPP, only to find the meeting postponed at the last moment. Everyone at the meeting accepted Mujib's four demands and called for the creation of interim federal and provincial governments with the convening of the National Assembly on 25 March. Rejecting Bhutto's insistence for a prior agreement on constitutional principles, the group critically commented that 'compromises insisted upon and arrived at outside the floor of the house and concealed from the scrutiny and vigilance of the people have no relevance to constitutional settlement, although they may have to make arrangements for sharing power'. They urged Yahya Khan to proceed to Dhaka and remove the 'misunderstandings, apprehensions and suspicions in frank and cordial talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman'.²⁷⁷

Yahya Khan decided finally to travel to Dhaka to negotiate with Mujib. He arrived there on 15 March and was accompanied with a nearly full complement of his junta generals.²⁷⁸ The President began his political deliberations with Mujib the following day. Early the next day, Yahya Khan had conceded to three of the four points that Mujib had insisted upon as a precondition to his attending the 25 March Assembly meeting.

²⁷⁴ Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

²⁷⁵ *Dawn*, 15 March 1971.

²⁷⁶ G. W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

²⁷⁷ *Dawn*, 15 March 1971.

²⁷⁸ The generals included Umar, Peerzada and Mitha. Yahya Khan is said to have asked Hamid to stay behind in case his presence at Dhaka be interpreted to be a sign of greater military involvement.

Now only Mujib's demand for an instant transfer of power remained to be resolved. Later, when Mujib and Yahya Khan were joined by their advisers, further discussions took place on the possibility of a transfer of power and proposals leading to an interim constitutional solution. They eventually agreed upon the following:

1. the lifting of Martial Law;
2. the continuation of Yahya Khan as President;
3. the creation of two constituent committees, one for West Pakistan and one for East Pakistan, to resolve provincial issues; and,
4. the drafting of a Constitution in the National Assembly sitting as one body after regional committees had completed their preliminary work.²⁷⁹

Further talks took place on 19 March. After this meeting Mujib was to inform a senior military officer that 'he and Yahya had tentatively agreed on the formation of a national government composed of eleven ministers. Six of these, including the Prime Minister, were to come from East Pakistan, and five, (three from PPP and two from the National Awami Party), were to come from West Pakistan'.²⁸⁰ There was one important question still to be addressed: how to deal with the legality of an interim situation after the repeal of Martial Law and before the meeting of the National Assembly and the promulgation of a new Constitution? This issue was to be resolved by a meeting of negotiating teams representing the President and the Awami League. That evening the two teams met, and after lengthy discussions which continued till the following morning, it appeared that this issue had been resolved between the negotiating parties.

The presidential team then prepared a draft incorporating the items the teams had agreed upon. The principal elements of the draft proclamation were as follows:

1. Martial Law would effectively end with the administration of oaths to provincial Cabinets;
2. the Provisional Constitutional Order of 4 April 1969 would serve as the fundamental law until the promulgation of the new Constitution;
3. Yahya Khan would continue as president during this interim period;
4. the President would exercise power as authorized by the Provisional Constitution Order and the 1962 Constitution;

²⁷⁹ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

5. a central Cabinet would be formed with representatives from both East and West Pakistan;
6. the National Assembly would function as prescribed by the 1962 Constitution except for 'limitations and modifications to be agreed upon with respect to the province of East Pakistan';
7. the functions of the provincial assemblies would be the same as under the 1962 Constitution, again with exceptions made for East Pakistan;
8. provincial governors would be appointed by the President in consultation with the leaders of the parliamentary groups of each province, while a Cabinet of ministers was to be appointed with a chief minister at its head to 'aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions';
9. within seven days of the creation of the provincial government, two constitutional committees would be established-one in Dhaka and the other at Islamabad - or the purposes of 'formulating special provisions and requirements of each province of Pakistan to be incorporated in the constitution to be framed by the National Assembly, which would be convened by the president after the committees had completed their work; and,
10. whenever 'it is made to appear to the President on a report from the Governor of a Province or otherwise, that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the Province assume to himself all or any of the functions of the executive government of the Province'.²⁸¹

On the evening of 19 March Mumtaz Daultana and Shaukat Hayat called on Mujib at his residence. Shaukat noticed that Mujib's companions Tajuddin Ahmed and Nazrul Islam seemed keen not to let him speak to them alone, he mentions that when Mujib 'asked the two to get tea for us, only one would go at a time and the other sat glued to his seat and would not budge, even if requested, till the other had returned to stand guard'. Later that evening Shaukat received a confidential messenger from Mujib. The messenger turned out to be an acquaintance of his, Khondkar Mushtaq, a leading Awami League member. Shaukat Hayat recalls:

[Khondkar] told me of the happenings since our last meeting a month earlier and how Sheikh Mujib had saved the situation on 7th March by his handling of the crowd, in the face of heavy odds, at the Paltan Maidan. Nineteen of their party

²⁸¹White Paper on the Crisis in East Pakistan, p. 18-20.

men had voted against his views as against three for him. Mushtaq had tears in his eyes and informed me that ever since, the Sheikh and he were suspects in the eyes of their opponents, and the Sheikh was virtually kept under guard as a prisoner by the extremists. He begged me to explain to the General that the situation was getting out of hand and they must be realistic and pass over power to Mujib so that he might get the situation under control.²⁸²

It would appear from Shaukat Hayat's testimony that Mujib's position had become fairly precarious. Trapped by his extremist colleagues, he must have, at this stage, keenly sought a resolution through the political impasse without being seen to have given ground. Despite the sudden rise in prospects of a solution to the crisis, there remained a dark cloud on the horizon. Yahya Khan had made it clear at the onset of the dialogues that though he was committed to the transfer of power, the final details would have to be agreed upon by all interested parties, including the PPP. With the arrival of Bhutto in Dhaka events suddenly took a turn for the worse.

Bhutto who had earlier rejected Yahya Khan's invitation to be present in Dhaka, now hurried to East Pakistan. Word of a 'settlement' between the President and Mujib had served to unnerve him. The difficulties of managing the proposed West Pakistani 'constitutional committee' would have weakened the position that he had so skillfully built for himself as the leader of the majority party in the West Wing. In the election he had only won a majority in Punjab. In Sindh he was three seats short of a majority, but once in power he would undoubtedly have been able to cobble a majority together by new converts to the PPP. Balochistan and the NWFP were out of his control altogether. Antagonism between the provinces would be intense and in all likelihood be directed towards Punjab, the bastion of PPP's strength. Conflicts between PPP and the smaller parties had already arisen and could only deepen further thereby fatally weakening Bhutto's claim to represent West Pakistan. From Bhutto's viewpoint any agreement between Yahya Khan and Mujib would put an end to his schemes to isolate Mujib. The possibility of forming a united West Pakistan front against Mujib and his Awami League would vanish and provide the Awami League with the freedom to draft the Constitution on its own. This was ruinous for Bhutto's ambitions as he would then be left out in the cold of political wilderness.

Bhutto's arrival at Dhaka with his fifteen aides only served to heighten Awami League's suspicions of a planned conspiracy. The mutual distrust between Mujib and Bhutto had turned to near loathing. When they met at the President's House on 22 March, 'neither Mujib nor Bhutto would look more than obliquely at the other, at first they refused to converse, each sitting half turned away from each other'.²⁸³ Yahya Khan reproached them for their childish behaviour and encouraged them to talk to each other. In his later

²⁸²Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

²⁸³Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

interview Yahya Khan stated that shortly before leaving Karachi for Dhaka Bhutto had made some acrimonious and critical comments about Mujib. When Mujib came to hear about these statements, he had complained to the President that Bhutto's intentions to negotiate with him at this juncture were clearly suspect, and there was no point for them to meet with each other. Had Bhutto been serious in his aims, Mujib insisted, the PPP leader would not have been so vituperative towards him on the very eve of their discussions. Yahya Khan states that he prevailed upon Mujib to meet with Bhutto. At the meeting he insisted that the two politicians go outside into the garden and have a private talk. According to Yahya Khan, during these talks Bhutto bluntly asked Mujib what share he would have in the future Awami League government. Mujib replied tersely that he would have none.²⁸⁴

The next day the Awami League team returned the president's negotiating team's draft proclamation insisting on a number of amendments. Three of these amendments caused consternation among the government team. First, the Awami League had substituted 'Constituent Conventions' for 'Constituent Committees' though their purpose remained unchanged. The second provision related to the oath to be sworn by the members of the National Assembly. The government's draft had emphasized sovereignty and obligation to the State, whereas the Awami League version emphasized obligation to the Constitution. It was the third change which magnified the consequences of the first two amendments in the minds of the government team. The Awami League wanted to change 'Federation of Pakistan' to 'Confederation of Pakistan'.

Interestingly enough, when Bhutto met Yahya Khan on the morning of 24 March, he raised no objections to the Awami League's amended draft proclamation, instead he opposed the removal of Martial Law which Yahya Khan had earlier committed himself to in the government's original draft proclamation. Bhutto insisted that such a step would create a legal vacuum. This argument had earlier been effectively countered by Yahya Khan's constitutional advisers who had insisted that a Presidential Proclamation would suffice as it had done when Yahya Khan had taken power by abrogating the 1962 Constitution. In reality the removal of martial law would have been a major concern to Bhutto's backers - the junta generals. The removal of martial law would have rendered them powerless overnight. Having enjoyed supreme power - and its accompanied trappings for the past many months, the generals were reluctant to part with it. For Bhutto their loss of power was equally damaging. The sudden impotence of the generals would have effectively enfeebled Bhutto's role in the future politics of the nation. It appears likely that the generals had decided to crush the insurgent Awami League several months before. They had been simply waiting for Mujib to politically trip up and provide them with a 'legal' justification to deal with him with the use of armed force. Bhutto's role as a premeditated last minute spoiler of the negotiations cannot be discounted. Since late February troops had been pouring into East Pakistan to

²⁸⁴ Yahya Khan Interview (Reprint), *Daily Khabarain*, 14 July 1995.

reinforce the existing battalions located there. It is worth recalling that when the leaders of the smaller West Pakistan parties met with Yahya Khan in Dhaka during these critical last days of negotiations, several of them remember that 'Peerzada watched Yahya like a hawk, much as they felt Mujib had been by Tajuddin' during their meeting with him a few days earlier.²⁸⁵ Clearly in these last dying moments of political tragedy, the two main participants were no longer masters of their own fates.

As a last attempt, Yahya Khan tried to enlist the help of some of the West Pakistani politicians present in Dhaka to break the impasse. A West Pakistani delegation went to Mujib on the night of 23 March to try and convince him on two points. The first was to ask him to allow the meeting of the National Assembly to be held before the separate constitutional conventions. Mujib insisted that this matter had already been agreed upon in the original draft proclamation issued by the government team and it was now impossible for him to go back on it. Their other request was for the inclusion of Bhutto and his PPP into Mujib's Cabinet. This demand was rejected out of hand by Mujib. On the evening of 24 March, Awami League representatives met with the President's team for what turned out to be the last time. The hard line Tajuddin informed the government that their amended proclamation was final as far as the Awami League was concerned, but they were willing to accept certain minor changes of language.²⁸⁶ According to Tajuddin, General Peerzada promised to telephone them to arrange a further meeting to finalize the terms of the amended draft proclamation. The call was never to come.

One of the West Pakistani politicians present at Dhaka was Ghous Buksh Bizenjo, then the provincial party president of NAP, Balochistan. He returned to Karachi in the early hours of 25 March. A few hours after his arrival he visited my - house to provide me with an up-date of the situation in the Eastern Wing. While the fact that the crack-down was about to take place was unknown to us all, Bizenjo succeeded in painting an extremely dismal picture of the scene at Dhaka. He stated that he, along with other West Pakistani politicians present in the Eastern Wing, had managed to prevail upon Mujib to adopt a more conciliatory attitude for the sole sake of maintaining the unity of the country. Mujib and his lieutenant Khondkar Mushtaq, according to Bizenjo, had finally agreed to the idea of forming his majority government without insisting upon the removal of Martial Law. This had become the serious constitutional sticking point between the negotiating sides. But at the same time, in spite of having seemingly removed the only major point of disagreement between the two sides Bizenjo sounded very despondent. He then confirmed my suspicions that Yahya Khan was not fully in control of the government. Bizenjo told me that Yahya Khan had become hedged in by ambitious and intriguing members of the Junta who had already decided to 'sort out Mujib'. According to Bizenjo, these generals had gone as far as to insist that the National

²⁸⁵ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

²⁸⁶ Press Statement issued by Tajuddin Ahmed (as Prime Minister-in-e Bangladesh), 17 April 1971 (quoted in: Safdar Mahmood, *The Deliberate Debacle*, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore. 1976, pp. 216-28).

Assembly be suspended. In its place they called for allowing the provincial majorities to form their localized governments. It seemed clear that, in addition to their antipathy towards Mujib, the members of the Junta had developed the taste for power and were not keen to voluntarily abdicate at the Centre.

On the night of 25 March the Pakistan Army moved into the streets of Dhaka and began their 'Operation Searchlight'. The objectives were to neutralize the political power of the Awami League and to re-establish the writ of the junta regime. In its initial stages it was executed in accordance with a carefully prepared plan as is the case of most military operations. First, the top leadership of the Awami Party had to be captured. The second priority was to neutralize its more extreme supporters, such as university student leaders and heads of other similar organizations. Most of the Awami League leaders managed to evade capture with the exception of Mujib. Many people died in the first few days. Later charges were made that the Army's Special Force personnel had been instructed to wipe out all trace of existing Bengali intellectualism. The evidence is necessarily limited. One case highlighted by Herbert Feldman was that of A. Ahad whom he described as being 'head of Dacca's leading firm of lawyers and a director of many important companies'. Feldman states that Ahad 'was arrested at the time of the army's crack-down and has never been seen since. There is little doubt he was shot.'²⁸⁷ Ahad would hardly have fallen under the description of a firebrand secessionist.

There can be little doubt that innocent civilians were mercilessly killed during the army action which culminated months later in the destruction of the country as we once knew it. In West Pakistan there was only one leading civilian who openly justified the military crack-down from its very outset and that was Bhutto. He announced on his return from Dhaka, 'Thank God, Pakistan has been saved.'²⁸⁸ Yahya Khan's proclamation in Karachi on 26 March announced: 'I have ordered the armed forces to do their job and fully restore the authority of the Government.'²⁸⁹ There were nearly two complete army divisions present in East Pakistan by March 6 to carry out the junta's orders. The decision to use them against Pakistani civilians reflected the callously blinkered vision of the ruling junta. In an effort to save their concept of Pakistan they had embarked on a venture that would take it as near to a state of national destruction as was possible. It would be futile to blame India for the final aftermath which resulted in abysmal defeat of the Pakistan Army. The state of hostility which existed between Pakistan and its neighbor ensured that India would take advantage whenever a situation detrimental to Pakistan arose. It was the army junta which provided India with a vital opportunity to wreak its revenge on Pakistan. The military crackdown in

²⁸⁷ Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

²⁸⁸ *The Morning News*, Karachi, 27 March 1971.

²⁸⁹ Surprisingly, General Gul Hassan who as Chief of General Staff was actively involved in military rather than martial law matters, insists that he and the Army GHQ at Rawalpindi were kept in the dark about the final order to take military action until after the event: Lt.-General Gul Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

East Pakistan should never have taken place. The blame for this disaster lies squarely on the generals of the junta who ordained themselves to be the judges of what was best for Pakistan. Yahya Khan did try to find alternate solutions but he was found to be inept for the task in the end. He totally lacked the political wiles to deal with the conundrum posed by the Awami League and East Pakistan. Lastly, of all the politicians in West Pakistan there was only one who had wholeheartedly supported the military action at the time it took place. He had even gone as far as suggesting to Yahya Khan that 'light military action' would solve the problem.²⁹⁰ Astute as Bhutto was, he must have known that military action of any sort by a perceived 'alien' force could only permanently shatter the already tenuous bonds that kept the two wings of the country together. His close involvement with the junta generals during the preceding months, and the role that he played to further complicate an already perilous situation by attempts to isolate the Awami League, denounce his intentions from the onset. The junta generals could at least profess the claim that they had acted in what they perceived to be the best interests of the country. Bhutto was in no position to offer any such excuse. He as always remained blind to all other interests save his own.

The civil war that soon enveloped the Eastern Wing had not been properly envisaged by the Junta leadership. Inflicting an act of armed brutality upon a majority of the nation's citizenry was a solution which could only have been conceived by a moribund military dictatorship. On 14 April 1971 I met Air Marshal Rahim Khan at a dinner held in his honor by Air Commodore and Begum Balwant Dass. Rahim Khan had just returned from Dhaka and what news he had to tell us was depressing to the extreme. He stated that thirty-six men of the Air Force had been killed in isolated posts in East Pakistan. The Army was coming across stiff opposition from armed Bengali rebels and the prevailing mood throughout the Eastern Wing was one of resistance. Even those who had recently been imprisoned on various charges of sedition and treason refused to be cowed down and continued to remain Sefiant. Thirty percent of the personnel of the Pakistan Air Force had been grounded because of suspected divided loyalties. Having said all this Rahim Khan remained optimistic about the end result. His views, I have no doubt, echoed those of his service colleagues in the Army Junta. Even more so, when he could not help but contemptuously add: 'Don't worry! We will be able to sort out the Bingos'.

Shortly before the fall of Dhaka, a resolution was submitted to the United Nations Security Council by Poland to seek an end to the Indo-Pak hostilities. The Polish proposal called for an immediate cease-fire, troop withdrawals and transfer of power in East Pakistan to the elected representatives. These provisions aroused considerable distress in India as they would have put an end to the Indian strategy of a decisive military victory leading to the breaking of Pakistan into two and the formation of an

²⁹⁰ Bhutto's interview with Kuldip Nayar, *Statesman*, New Delhi, 23 1972.

independent Bangladesh.²⁹¹ Much to India's chagrin the resolution also contained the clause calling for 'renunciation of occupied territory'. This would have led to the return of some of the strategic points India had seized from Pakistan across the Kashmir cease-fire line. But this was not to be. Subsequent historians reported:

In our interviews with him in 1979, Yahya Khan related a rather curious account of his experience with Bhutto on the Polish resolution. Yahya had been talking to Bhutto - who was at the UN meetings in New York - by telephone about several matters. At one point Yahya said that he was far away, of course, but the Polish resolution looked good, and 'we should accept it'. Bhutto replied, 'I can't hear you.' Yahya repeated himself several times, and Bhutto kept saying, 'What? What?' The operator in New York finally intervened and said, 'I can hear him fine,' to which Bhutto replied, 'Shut up.'²⁹²

India by now had reluctantly conceded that it would have little choice but to accept the Polish resolution which had in reality originated from the Soviets. Fortunately for India, Bhutto, the head of the Pakistani delegation to the UN, came to its rescue. In the Security Council meeting on 15 December 1971, Bhutto condemned the UN for not acting promptly enough and then threw a public tantrum. No further discussions could be held on the resolution much to the delight of the amazed Indians present at the proceedings. As General Jacob, second-in-command of the Indian invasion forces, later admitted:

A Polish resolution, presumably backed by the Soviet Union, called for an immediate cease fire and troop withdrawals. Such a resolution, if adopted would have been disastrous for India. Fortunately for us Bhutto, on 15 December, tore up his copy of the resolution, denounced the United Nations and stormed out of the session.²⁹³

The following day the Indian forces presented the terms of surrender to General Niazi. A day later, on 16 December, Dhaka fell. If the Polish resolution had been accepted, the ignominy of 17 December would have been avoided. The fact that it demanded the transfer of power to the elected representatives rankled Bhutto. It meant a return of Mujib and the Awami League. Bhutto would then have been reduced in political rank. As a parliamentary minority leader, he would have been relegated to the peripheries of power.

²⁹¹ In fact key officials in India could not comprehend why Pakistan did not immediately agree to the Polish Resolution as it would 'have left India in a most difficult and compromising position': Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 306 (note 27).

²⁹² Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 306-7 (note 28).

²⁹³ Lt.-General J. F. R. Jacob, *Surrender at Dacca, Birth of a Nation*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 131-2.

CHAPTER 5

Entry of the Civilian Martial Law Administrator

Having successfully assisted the Junta in getting rid of Mujib, Bhutto's utility to the generals suffered a decline. After the military crackdown in East Pakistan, he was now only summoned by Yahya Khan when he was found to be of use to the regime. In July he was sent to Teheran to seek support from the Shah as the civil war was proving to be an expensive venture both militarily and financially. The US-imposed embargo on shipments of arms to Pakistan forced the government to resort to seeking military hardware from Iran's vast supply of US-made weaponry. After Bhutto's return from Iran Yahya Khan decided to confer with him regarding the possibilities of future constitutional arrangements. During the meeting, Bhutto tried his best to offer himself for the post of prime minister by pledging that Yahya Khan would remain the Head of State in any future government. Bhutto also tempered his persuasions making an implied threat. He told the president that 'If our opponents are put in power, we will oppose them and destroy them'. Yahya Khan replied rather curtly, 'Don't talk of confrontation with me... I want to transfer power to you but I cannot say who will be in power in the Centre'.²⁹⁴ The president had effectively closed the door on Bhutto's ambition of prime ministership. It left the PPP leader chafing at the bit.

In August 1971 General Gul Hassan mentions receiving a message from Bhutto through his emissary Sadiq Qureshi:

Sadiq informed me that he had come on an errand: Chairman Bhutto had especially sent him so that I should convey to the President that unless power was handed over to 'the elected representatives of the people' immediately, he [Bhutto] would no longer be in a position to keep his party in check. I questioned Sadiq as to why he had been sent to me, because the problem as he had divulged it lay in the bailiwick of the PSO(P) [General Peerzada]. I had nothing to do with such issues. Sadiq told me that the Chairman had already used up that channel.²⁹⁵

Gul Hassan further adds:

²⁹⁴ Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, p. 159: Wolpert quotes from minutes of the meeting between Yahya Khan and his aides, and Bhutto and his advisers, held on 29 July 1971.

²⁹⁵ Lieut.-General Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs*, p. 279.

I knew just as well as anyone in the country that the People's Party began and ended with Bhutto, so the question of holding his party in check, in that context had no meaning. On the other hand, if Bhutto had any notions regarding disturbing peace in the West and planned to embark upon a similar venture as was in process in the East Wing, then 'I would advise your Chairman that he should think again'. Yahya Khan would under no circumstances tolerate any upheaval here and Bhutto should not forget that the means available to curb such inclinations in this Wing were infinitely more effective, and I did not think Yahya Khan, or anyone else in his situation, would hesitate to employ all means at his disposal to save Pakistan. (Of course, I had to draw on my choicest vocabulary, of which my store is vast, and it is most explicit on such occasions.) I also volunteered to accompany Sadiq if he felt any constraints in expressing himself in my lucid style. He declined my offer and left.²⁹⁶

But it seems Bhutto was determined to press the issue. A week later he visited Gul Hassan in person. The General describes their conversation as follows:

'I am coming from a meeting with General Peerzada, who holds you in high esteem,' Bhutto said.

'So what am I supposed to do?' I asked.

'I would advise you to get close to him and work in tandem with him. The sooner you reconcile yourself to the fact that he is doing a very important job, the better for you,' Bhutto remarked menacingly. I could not let that one go. 'You seem to be again misinformed. I am not exactly driving a tonga from morning until sunset.'²⁹⁷

After which, according to Gul Hassan, Bhutto left his house 'rather unceremoniously'. This incident does serve to suggest that despite his recent problems with the Junta, Bhutto had managed to maintain his contacts with Peerzada. But even Peerzada was not able to ease Bhutto's political dilemma for others such as Yahya Khan had come to distrust the PPP leader. Uncertain about his own political future Bhutto remained haunted by the imprisoned Mujib. As Yahya Khan was about to leave for the Shah's grandiose '2000th anniversary' of Iranian monarchy, Bhutto advised him to have Mujib quickly tried for treason in a military court and then summarily executed.²⁹⁸ Yahya

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

²⁹⁸ Yahya Khan Interview (Reprint), Daily *Khabarain*, 14 July 1995. Bhutto's advice to Yahya was confirmed by G. W. Choudhury, who was then serving as a presidential adviser. Choudhury says that he was also approached by Bhutto to convince Yahya Khan. 'Bhutto's contention to me was that Yahya, being a weak person, was likely to succumb to world pressure and may release Mujib or might even transfer power to Mujib. It was therefore,

Khan ignored this piece of unsolicited advice. By September Bhutto had become deeply frustrated. While addressing a crowd outside Mr. Jinnah's mausoleum at Karachi, he gave vent to his feelings by dramatically crying out to the public: 'What happened in East Pakistan can happen in West Pakistan as well... But I warn the powers that be that we will not permit bloodshed here... Speak, speak, my Quaid when will this night of oppression end?... For God's sake, restore democracy.'²⁹⁹

Fate suddenly intervened for Bhutto. The imminent threat of an Indian invasion of East Pakistan rehabilitated Bhutto's value in the eyes of the regime. In late November Bhutto flew as Yahya Khan's personal emissary to Beijing to urgently request for some military hardware. It was an elevated post for him because he headed a team consisting of the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Air Force, Rahim Khan, as well as the Army Chief of the General Staff, General Gul Hassan. On 21 November the Indian Army had begun its attack across several places on the East Pakistan border and managed to capture some enclaves. Rather than consolidate a strong circumference of defence, the Commander of the Eastern Front, General Niazi, unwisely chose to disperse his troops to widespread positions on the border with the intention of evicting the enemy. In a large number of instances our troops on the border were quickly surrounded or at times bypassed by a larger enemy force. To relieve the pressure on the eastern front the Pakistan Air Force made air strikes on Indian air bases from West Pakistan and the war began in earnest in the western front. The strategy proved to be a total failure. On 17 December Pakistani troops in East Pakistan formally surrendered to India and Bangladesh became a reality.

When the public in West Pakistan learned of the military defeat there was shock, outrage and a keen urge to punish the leaders responsible for the national cataclysm. A foreign observer accurately summed up the situation:

Confidence in the military who had ruled Pakistan for so long was abruptly shattered. It was bad enough that in Dacca, before the eyes of the whole world, the Pakistan forces had surrendered unconditionally to an Indian general and all been made prisoners-of-war with no certainty when or at what further price they would be allowed to return home. But in addition Pakistan's East Wing was now clearly gone forever, and with it much of the country's wealth and population. All this at the hands of Pakistan's inveterate rival and enemy, India.³⁰⁰

The sense of disquiet had also begun to spread among the army. In the heartland of Punjab soldiers had been stoned and abused by civilians. The contempt and scorn of their countrymen was not easy to tolerate. Dishonored in the eyes of the public and

needed, according to Bhutto, to execute Mujib before Yahya went to Teheran in late 1971': G. W. Choudhury, *The Pakistan Times*, 22 September 1988.

²⁹⁹ Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, pp. 159-60.

³⁰⁰ Sir Morrice James, *Pakistan Chronicle*, p. 187.

with some 80,000 of their officers and men in Indian captivity, a large many soldiers seethed with resentment. In these circumstances a handful of senior officers decided to raise the voice of protest.³⁰¹ By mid-December the relations had become exceedingly tense between the army GHQ largely now under the control of General Gul Hassan (the Chief of Army Staff, General Hamid, was looked upon as a Junta man) and the politicized army generals at the Martial Law HQ. Gul Hassan maintains that during this period the 'discipline in the Army was on the verge of snapping and the repugnant odor of anarchy was in the air'.³⁰² At the army GHQ there was a strong feeling that Yahya Khan had to go. It is said that at this stage there were two schools of thought on his replacement. Some favored Asghar Khan, others Bhutto. Asghar Khan's opponents according to one source maintained that:

To introduce yet another armed forces man as President might well provoke stiff opposition in a nation which had no reason to feel confidence in the political skill of men in uniform. Moreover, in the election of 1970, Asghar Khan had been soundly defeated - in a Rawalpindi constituency, veritable home of the armed forces - by a People's Party candidate of no great prominence.³⁰³

It was now that Bhutto's previous efforts to ingratiate himself to General Gul Hassan and Air Marshal Rahim finally paid off. These two powerful figures openly opted for the PPP leader. Bhutto - who had only recently been appointed as Deputy Prime Minister under a titular civilian government artificially created on 7 December 1971 - was attending the United Nations to address an Emergency Session of the Security Council on Pakistan's behalf.³⁰⁴ He soon received information suggesting that he would do well to return as soon as possible. From 18 to 20 December 1971 Pakistan was virtually without a government. Yahya Khan had been rendered a virtual prisoner and the Junta generals had become totally enfeebled. Real power now lay with Gul Hassan. On 20 December Bhutto flew in to Rawalpindi and drove straight to the President's House where a short while later a transfer of power took place. Yahya Khan resigned and Bhutto became the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and the President of Pakistan.

* * *

Bhutto had finally achieved his long held ambition to become the most powerful figure in the country. On taking power he announced a 'new' beginning for Pakistan and

³⁰¹ Six of these officers-including General Shamim, Brigadiers Iqbal Mehdi Shah and Farrukh Bakht Ali - were later compulsorily retired from the army. Later when General Hamid, the Chief of Staff, addressed a meeting of officers held at the Rawalpindi GHQ a number of younger officers responded to him by loud mutinous booing. Some of them even turned abusive and openly denounced the Junta generals as 'bastards' and 'drunkards'.

³⁰² Lt.-General Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs, op. cit.*, p. 344.

³⁰³ Herbert Feldman, *The End and the Beginning, op. cit.*, p. 187.

³⁰⁴ Nurul Amin had been made the prime minister.

promised its citizens that he would 'rebuild our democratic institutions'.³⁰⁵ Though now he professed to work towards establishing democracy, he was the very same man who had only a decade earlier advised Ayub Khan to establish 'a one-party system in which roles of the legislative and judicial branches of the government were to be completely subservient to an all-powerful central authority'.³⁰⁶ Despite his proclivity for delivering grandiloquent speeches in favor of democracy, Bhutto was now resolved to wrest all power into his own hands. An astute political operator, he realized that he in his quest for total power would have to contend with all existing power groupings. According to one of his close advisors, Bhutto judged these 'power blocs' to be: (a) The Military; (b) The Bureaucracy; (c) Big Business; and (d) The Politicians.³⁰⁷ Within a few months of obtaining power Bhutto made determined attempts to undermine each and every one of these so-called 'power blocs'.

Shortly after assuming power Bhutto consolidated his position by swiftly dealing with the crisis at hand. He placed Yahya Khan under 'protective custody' and forcibly retired Generals Hamid, Peerzada, Umar, Mitha and two others.³⁰⁸ A few days later a number of senior naval officers, including the Naval Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Muzaffar Hussain were similarly retired. By 7 January 1972 Mujib was free and bound for London on his way to make his return to Bangladesh. According to General Arif before Mujib left Bhutto informed him that:

he [Bhutto] was personally responsible for saving him from the jaws of death. He repeatedly mentioned that General Yahya Khan had been determined to execute Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ... For that reason, said Bhutto, he had him shifted from Mianwali jail to Chasma rest-house, to take him out of the reach of General Yahya Khan. He repeatedly requested Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that on his arrival at Dhaka he should disclose publicly that Bhutto had saved his life.³⁰⁹

I have no reason to doubt General Arif's claim. Veracity, as I have mentioned earlier, was never one of Bhutto's strong traits. The fact that Bhutto should choose to twist the truth around and wish to be publicly proclaimed as Mujib's savior, gives this account greater authenticity. Bhutto had always prided himself as an artful dissembler. In a vindictive attempt to distance himself from the previous Martial Law regime a storm of lurid publicity was unleashed in the daily Press purporting to expose the private life of Yahya Khan by giving details of his alleged drunken debaucheries. In an interview with

³⁰⁵ Z. A. Bhutto, 'Address to the Nation', 20 December 1971 (Z. A. *Bhutto Speeches and Statements*, vol. 1, Government of Pakistan, Karachi, 1972, p. 1).

³⁰⁶ Shahid Javed Burki, *Pakistan under Bhutto 1971-1977*, Macmillan, London, 1980, p. 80.

³⁰⁷ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 380.

³⁰⁸ The other two were Generals Khuda Dad and Kiyani.

³⁰⁹ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, Oxford, Karachi, 1995, p. 39

Oriana Fallaci he was also to refer to his former benefactors in the Junta, such as General Peerzada, as an 'illiterate gang of psychopaths'.³¹⁰

Armed with the powers of CMLA and President Bhutto appointed his loyalists as governors of the four remaining provinces. A Federal Cabinet was sworn in consisting largely of PPP ministers, such as J. A. Rahim, Sheikh Rasheed, Mubashir Hassan, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Meraj Khalid. On 1 January 1972 the Martial Law government took state control over all major industries.³¹¹ Two weeks later the government abolished the practice of management agencies. Bhutto had by now commenced his onslaught on Big Business, one of his despised 'power blocs'. This policy was continued with the nationalization of the vegetable oil industry in August 1972 and the privately owned banks on 1 January 1974. While to a large extent Bhutto was justified in limiting the excesses of wealth being reaped by a handful of families, the manner in which the policy was implemented resulted in long lasting damage to the national economy. A period of great uncertainty followed the nationalizations. The erosion in the confidence of the business community led to a sharp decline in investments for the decades that followed. Pakistan experienced a flight of experienced businessmen and their capital. It also resulted in the growth of a grossly over-staffed, incompetent and corrupt public sector which bedevils the economy to this very day. The state ownership of the banks would eventually directly lead to pauperization of the financial system under successive corrupt and self-aggrandizing governments.

As part of his economic agenda, Bhutto announced a new series of agrarian land reforms in March 1972. The reforms reduced the ceiling of holdings from 500 (as laid down in the 1959 land reform) to 150 acres in the case of irrigated land and from 1000 acres to 300 acres in the case of unirrigated land. The land in excess of these ceilings was to be resumed by the state without compensation to the owners. While most agricultural land holdings - including mine - were severely affected, Bhutto had already ensured that his farm property remained fully protected.³¹²

On 3 March 1972 Bhutto targeted the Armed Forces. The Army and Air Force Chiefs who played the vital roles of placing Bhutto in power were unceremoniously dismissed. The manner in which it was done verged slightly on the absurd. The unsuspecting General Gul Hassan and Air Marshal Rahim were invited to the President's House where they were presented with resignation letters for them to sign. After signing, Gul

³¹⁰ Oriana Fallaci, *Interview with History*, (English translation), Hough Mifflin, Boston, 1976, p. 191.

³¹¹ These industries included iron and steel, basic metals, heavy engine electrical equipment, automotive assembly and manufacture, tractor assembly and manufacture, cement, petro-chemicals, oil refineries, and public utilities. Thirty-one large firms controlling about seventy industrial units were placed under eleven corporations under a newly created Ministry of Production.

³¹² In May 1971, while our mutual friends, the Lebacqz, were visiting Karachi, I met Nusrat Bhutto who confided to me that her husband had recently transferred the ownership of a large portion of his agricultural holding onto the names of his farm staff. She then suggested that I do the same to forestall the impact of future land reforms. Needless to add, I did not follow her advice.

Hassan and Rahim Khan were put in a car, in the custody of a 'pistol-packing' PPP Federal Minister, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, and driven at breakneck speed to Lahore by a nervous driver, who happened to be none other than the PPP Governor of Punjab, Ghulam Mustafa Khar.³¹³ To prevent a retaliatory *coup d'état* attempt Bhutto had temporarily disabled the army hierarchy by having simultaneously summoned the Army's Chief of General Staff, the Director of Military Operations and the Director of Military Intelligence for a spurious meeting at a nearby building. Despite all the precautionary measures a great deal of nervousness was exhibited by the civilians, including the CMLA himself. Gul Hassan mentions in his memoirs that Bhutto's hands were exceedingly sweaty when he shook hands with him at their final parting that day.

After this successful escapade against the military, Bhutto abolished the title of 'Commander-in-Chief' replacing it with the more modest one of 'Chief of Staff'. He also ensured that replacement service chiefs were not awarded the title of Deputy Martial Law Administrators unlike their more powerful predecessors. Having replaced Gul Hassan with the ever compliant General Tikka Khan, Bhutto now appropriated key personnel functions from the army GHQ. An informal three-man committee headed by Bhutto³¹⁴ began approving all promotions and transfers of officers of the rank of brigadier-general and above. It is reported that he used this committee to distribute the top military positions among officers who did not have any known group loyalties to safeguard his own position.³¹⁵ So, within three months of attaining power Bhutto had made himself reasonably secure against the possibility of the army reasserting itself. The most dominant of Bhutto's four 'power blocs' had been emasculated for the time being.

Bhutto was also determined to teach the third remaining '*power bloc*', the bureaucrats, a lesson. Soon after coming to power, on 12 March 1972, he compulsorily retired 1303 civil servants for alleged corruption or incompetence. Among the dismissed were a number of senior civil servants who Bhutto believed had opposed him in his days of political wilderness after being sacked in 1966 from Ayub Khan's government. These officials included Chief Secretaries of Punjab and Sindh, Secretary for Defence, and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. In the words of one historian, The message that was received by the bureaucracy as a result of the purge was clear and straightforward: "Support the policies of the People's Party or look for another job".³¹⁶

A further blow to the bureaucrats took place in 1973 when the constitutional guarantees protecting their employment from political interference were withdrawn. Major administrative reforms soon followed which abolished the Civil Service of Pakistan, the

³¹³ Lt.-General Gul Hassan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 368-9.

³¹⁴ The other members of the selection committee included his two loyalist army officers: the Army Chief General Tikka Khan and Bhutto's Military Secretary Major-General Imtiaz Ali Ahmed.

³¹⁵ Shahid Javed Burki, *Pakistan under Bhutto 1971-1977*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

³¹⁶ Charles H. Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan*, Oxford, Karachi 1897, p. 81.

elitist heir of the original Imperial Civil Service of India. In actuality the CSP had maintained reasonably high levels of competence and integrity, its major weakness lay in its elitist, authoritarian and inflexible outlook. Rather than trying to curb these tendencies and forcing the CSP to accept democratic norms, Bhutto wanted the bureaucrats to buckle under his authority. The new reforms opened up entry to the civil service for people of all ages and not just through competitive exams restricted to college graduates. Entrants went through a less rigorous training period in a modest new Academy for Administrative Training. Another reform, which proved to be even more corrosive to the previous high standards of the civil service, was the new system of lateral entry. In this new system entrants had only to meet a basic few elementary standards set by the Establishment Division - and not the Federal Public Service Commission. The Establishment Division, which was headed by one of Bhutto's chosen underlings, Viqar Ahmed - an audits and accounts service man-employed new recruits on a clearly political basis. During the PPP government 1374 officers of questionable ability were recruited by this division.³¹⁷ According to one commentator:

The withdrawal of constitutional guarantees and making the civil servants answerable to the head of administration were steps taken to reduce the power of the bureaucracy. Once all the Ordinances and Acts aimed at reforming the civil administration were on the books and once the CSP had been abolished, the senior civil servant could no longer act with the degree of independence that was available to them under previous administrations. This diminution in the power of the civil bureaucracy made possible the concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister.³¹⁸

Now the only remaining 'power bloc' to be dealt with were the politicians. But before we examine Bhutto's maneuverings against his political opponents mention must be made of his dealings with the two other vital pillars of a democratic system; the judiciary and the Press.

The courts in Pakistan have regularly escaped closer scrutiny mainly because of our instilled and traditional concept of respect for the institution of the judiciary. Ever since Chief Justice Munir's ill-conceived judgment in the Maulvi Tamizuddin Case, the issue of legitimacy of a usurping government has been at the forefront of a number of constitutional decisions. In the 1958 Dosso Case the Supreme Court had upheld the 'doctrine of necessity' in giving legitimacy to the usurping Ayub Khan. In early 1972 the Supreme Court tried to reassert itself after years of authoritarian rule under Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan. It decided to overrule the principle laid down in the Dosso Case and concluded that in 1969 Ayub Khan had no authority to turn over the government to Yahya Khan, who in turn had no authority to accept power or to impose martial law. As

³¹⁷ In 1974 a local magazine identified more than a hundred senior level appointees as close relatives and associates of Federal Ministers: *Zindigi* Lahore, July 1974.

³¹⁸ Shahid Javed Burki, *Pakistan under Bhutto 1971-1977*, p. 101.

Yahya Khan's successor as CMLA, Bhutto was not entirely pleased with the idea of a newly assertive judiciary. Consequently, in the years that followed, he endeavored to circumscribe the powers of the courts at every opportunity. A number of subsequent amendments made to the 1973 Constitution directly impinged on the jurisdiction of the Superior Courts. The Fourth Amendment seriously restricted the High Courts' ability to grant interim relief to detainees. The Fifth Amendment further curtailed the High Courts' powers to judicially interfere in any aspect of a preventive detention case, straight from the initial registration of the case at a police station onwards. The Amendment also declared that laws made pursuant to emergency proclamations had 'been validly made and shall not be called into question in any court' even if they conflicted with the fundamental rights specified in the Constitution. In addition the government amended the Defence of Pakistan Rules (DPR) in 1976 to give specially appointed tribunals exclusive jurisdiction over offences punishable under the DPR.

This amendment also affected the judges more directly. Appointments to the superior courts had always required government confirmation, but during Bhutto's rule these were often postponed or withheld, leaving judges with only temporary appointments. The Fifth Amendment curtailed the length of service for chief justices. Bhutto's own confidant, Rafi Raza, later summarized these changes forced upon the senior judiciary:

... significantly, the term of office of the Chief Justices of the Superior Courts was to be determined not solely by age but, as an alternative, by a fixed period ... The Executive was also empowered to transfer a Judge to any High Court for up to a year without his consent or even consultation with the Chief Justice concerned. Furthermore, in the past, a powerful Chief Justice of a High Court had at times refused to be appointed a puisne Judge of the Supreme Court; now, however, it was provided that on failure to accept such appointment he 'shall be deemed to have retired from his office'. In addition, the Executive could appoint 'any one of the Judges', and not the most senior, to act as Chief Justice.³¹⁹

Bhutto was determined to browbeat the senior judges into submission and to a large extent, he succeeded. When members of the opposition facing government oppression sought protection from the courts, they found a number of the judges completely cowed down. In September 1972 I filed a writ petition in the Lahore High Court against a number of government MNAs. It took six years before I received a response from the High Court.³²⁰ By then it was 1978 and General Zia was firmly in power. It should also be remembered that in 1974 it was the Supreme Court of Pakistan which upheld the ban against the National Awami Party (NAP), which was then declared to be 'a political party ... operating in a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan'. At no stage during these proceedings did the Supreme Court bother to subject the

³¹⁹ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 186.

³²⁰ The facts of this case are discussed more fully in chapter 6.

government's evidence to a thorough or impartial scrutiny.³²¹ A recent legal historian commenting on the Supreme Court's ruling against the NAP bitingly added: 'The sum of its long judgment ... was to endorse the Prime Minister's contempt for political opposition'.³²² Clearly, the days of Bhutto's rule were a sad and pathetic period for a number of our senior judges as they shamefully resorted to taking shelter behind the high dignity of their office.³²³

The other institution, which also had to bear Bhutto's determined onslaught, was the Press. As soon as he attained power Bhutto dismissed the Chairman of the National Press Trust, retired General Habibullah Khan,³²⁴ and the Editor-in-Chief of *The Pakistan Times*, Z. A. Suleri. His rival from the Ayub Khan days, Altaf Gauhar, who was then the editor of *Dawn* was placed under arrest. The printer, editor and publisher of *Urdu Digest*, *Zindigi* (Urdu), and *Punjab Punch* (in English) were arrested for protesting against Bhutto's martial law and were convicted and sentenced even before the writ petitions challenging their arrests could be heard in the Lahore High Court. Shorish Kashmiri of *Chatan* was also sent to jail. The newspapers *Hurriyat* and *Jasarat* were banned and their editors, Anwar Khaleel and Salahuddin, imprisoned. The *Mehran* was banned as well. Iqbal Burney's weekly *Outlook* was forced into shutting down its publication. The daily *Sun* was placed in an equally grim predicament, leaving its management little choice but to close down its press.

The journalists of Pakistan took a relentless battering. Restrictions were placed on government advertisements and the supply of newsprint was reduced to publishers who did not follow the official line. As early as 13 February 1972 Bhutto had created an 'official media' by taking charge of the National Press Trust and suspending its Board of Trustees, along with the Boards of Directors of all three companies the Trust controlled.³²⁵ This gave the government complete control over a large part of the printed media. After closing down any newspaper that proclaimed its editorial independence and bullying the remainder into submission, the reporting of the 'independent' Press soon became no different from that of the official media of the National Press Trust. Political reporting was largely restricted to the daily uttering's of

³²¹ One serious indictment against the Supreme Court's supposed impartiality was the fact that it allowed newspaper reports to be admitted as evidence. The Chief Justice himself excused this ruling on the grounds that newspaper accounts of events were often admitted into American Court. What the Chief Justice chose blatantly to ignore was that the Press in Pakistan was under strict government supervision. Not only was political news coverage largely restricted to government issued press notes but any falsified piece of information could be published at the government instance. Thus, the Supreme Court cravenly opted to accept these reports as gospel truth.

³²² Paula R. Newberg, *Judging the State-courts and constitutional politics in Pakistan*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 155.

³²³ Sadly, the judiciary proved to be no different during Zia's time when a majority of the Supreme Court's judges disgraced their office by taking an oath to obey Zia's Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO).

³²⁴ General Habibullah Khan was imprisoned by Bhutto without adequate justification. He was shabbily placed on public display with his hands shackled in chains like a common criminal.

³²⁵ The daily newspapers controlled by the National Press Trust were *Morning News* from Karachi; *The Pakistan Times* from Lahore and Rawalpindi; *Imroze* from Lahore and Multan; *Mashriq* from Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar.

Bhutto and his underlings. Even reports on the proceedings of the National Assembly gave coverage only to the government benches. On occasion there would be mention of speeches made by the Opposition and its leader, Wali Khan, but these were nearly always restricted to a bare minimum, taking no more than one or two sentences of a newspaper column.

* * *

Bhutto's dealing with the politicians were noted by a remarkable degree of intolerance virtually from the day he took office as CMLA and President. Nor was it always restricted to members of rival parties. The contemptuous manner he displayed to the members of his own PPP bears a few words of mention. During his time as CMLA Bhutto had taken offence at the behavior of one of his PPP MNAs. Mukhtar Rana, a labor leader from Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) had displeased his leader with his leftist ideas and outbursts of divergent opinion. He was deposed as an MNA even before the National Assembly met. Rana was arrested under Martial Law regulations on a charge of incitement to murder. After being subjected to severe physical abuse according to one report he almost died under torture³²⁶ - he was rapidly convicted in a Military Court and sentenced to a five-year term of imprisonment, all within a matter of days.

A number of Opposition MNA's, including myself, spoke in his defence both inside and outside the Assembly. Later I was to receive a letter from Mukhtar Rana, written on a torn piece of paper. It had been smuggled out from his jail cell. He touchingly thanked me for my efforts on his behalf and bitterly accused his former leader for betraying the cause of democracy. Later a by-election was held in the vacant Lyallpur seat. Rana's sister stood to oppose the official PPP candidate but as one of Bhutto's ministers later admitted, she had little chance of winning; the by-election had been heavily rigged in favor of the government party.³²⁷ In a short space of time an outspoken and courageous PPP MNA had been replaced by an extremely compliant one. It provided a sharp and brutal lesson for all of the PPP elected representatives. Their parliamentary positions existed solely at the whim of their party chairman.

Bhutto's attitude towards the fourth and final '*power bloc*' - the opposition politicians - was firmly bedded in a state of violent hostility. As historian Paula R. Newberg later succinctly summarized in her book:

The PPP [on attaining power] soon equated opposition with anti-state behavior, dissent on provincial rights with irredentism, and demands for due process with separatism. The Prime Minister responded to opposition by bringing all the

³²⁶ Anwar H. Syed, *The Discourse and Politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto*, Macmillan, London, 1992, p. 257.

³²⁷ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 357.

power of the state to bear against it: first intelligence units and paramilitary forces, then civil and military courts and finally, the army...³²⁸

* * *

On the evening of 20 December 1971, upon assuming the offices of Civilian Martial Law Administrator and President, Bhutto made his emotional 'Picking up the Pieces' speech on the national radio and television network. He spoke in English.

I would not like to see Martial Law remain one day longer than necessary ... one more second than necessary. I want the flowering of our society ... I want suffocation to end ... This is not the way civilized countries are run. Civilization means Civil Rule ... democracy ... We have to rebuild democratic institutions ... We have to rebuild a situation in which the common man in the street, can tell me to go to hell ...³²⁹

In retrospect these words proved to be a remarkable exercise in deceit and deception. In the months that followed if any man, let alone 'a poor man in the street', had possessed the temerity to 'tell [Bhutto] to go to hell' he would have quickly found himself in the brutal hands of the Federal Security Forces (FSF). Within a brief passage of time even senior PPP party men and government ministers found themselves facing the ruthless attention of this paramilitary force.

Within days of assuming power Bhutto appointed his party men as governors of the three of the four remaining provinces in the country. In Punjab he appointed Ghulam Mustafa Khar, in Sindh his cousin Mumtaz Bhutto, and in NWFP Hayat Sherpao. He paused for a few days before announcing a governor for Balochistan. Unlike the NWFP where the political situation remained more fluid in the presence of rival contending parties, the PPP had failed to win even a single provincial seat in Balochistan. Bhutto invited two of the three leading Sirdars of the province - Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri - to meet with him to discuss the governorship issue. He purposely ignored Akbar Bugti ostensibly because Akbar was not an official member of NAP, Bhutto was shrewd enough to realize that by not inviting him he would annoy Akbar. He was hoping to exacerbate a rift that was forming within the ranks of the Baloch leadership in NAP. On arriving at Islamabad Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri declined the official car sent by the president, and instead drove to Shahi Bagh to meet with the president of NAP, Wali Khan, having decided to consult with him before meeting Bhutto. The PPP leader treated their action as a personal snub to him. Rejecting the obvious candidates Bhutto instead appointed Ghous Buksh Raisani as governor of Balochistan.

³²⁸ Paula R. Newberg, *Judging the State*, p. 118.

³²⁹ Z. A. Bhutto, *Speeches and Statements*, vol. 1, 20 December 1971-3 March 1972 (Karachi, Government of Pakistan, 1972), p. 1.

Since the resurrection of politics in Balochistan, after the 1969 downfall of Ayub Khan, the political affairs had come under the influence of a triumvirate of Sirdars from the leading Baloch tribes. Much of Baloch tribal culture and history are strongly permeated with notions of *ghairat*. Among the Sirdars this sense of pride is heightened to a much greater degree, particularly more so when dealing with *sayals*, 'their social peers', which in their case meant other Baloch Sirdars. In earlier days Sirdars of different tribes rarely encountered each other. When they did meet, it required a great measure of etiquette to get around the sensitivities of individual tribal self-esteem, especially so among the rival major tribes-each of which invariably claimed some minor degree of superiority to the other. In modern times with the development of roads and large towns, Sirdars found themselves suddenly thrust upon each other at increasingly regular intervals. Schools such as Aitchison had brought with it a degree of harmony among Sirdars from tribes such as the Marri, Mazari and Bugti but because of the supervening Baloch culture even these school bonds proved to be tenuous at times. A political alliance, such as the Balochistan NAP, led as it was by three leading Balochistan Sirdars - Akbar Bugti, Khair Buksh Marri and Attaullah Mengal - was at times fraught with sensitivities.

When Attaullah and Khair Buksh left for Islamabad to meet with Bhutto, the third member of the triumvirate was naturally enraged. Unlike Bizenjo, who had no qualms about accompanying the two to Islamabad uninvited, Akbar suffered from the endemic Baloch weakness of a surfeit of pride. Rather than angrily gnash his teeth in private, he decided to organize a public demonstration in Quetta against Bhutto and his Martial Law government. When the acting President of NAP declined to give the demonstration the party's official sanction without the leadership's approval - who happened to be in Islamabad. Akbar angrily went ahead with it anyway. On the day of the demonstration the streets of Quetta resounded to rather unusual slogans: 'Bhutto *murdabad* was not out of the ordinary but 'Aurora *zindabad*' certainly was.³³⁰ It was very much in line with Akbar's habit of charting an independent course for himself. These demonstrations soon became a daily event once Raisani was appointed governor, having by then been given official approval by the NAP.

Akbar Bugti was a known individualist. Some ten months earlier, in February 1971, he had travelled to East Pakistan at Mujib's personal invitation where he decided to give his unconditional support to the Awami League leader. Accusing Bhutto of wanting the delay of the National Assembly, Akbar forthrightly demanded that the Awami League be allowed to frame the Constitution, adding that 'the people of Baluchistan want the constitution based on the Six Point formula'.³³¹ As an East Pakistani weekly had at that time enthusiastically noted:

³³⁰ General Aurora was the commander of the Indian fortresses that accepted the surrender of the Pakistan Army stationed in East Pakistan in December 1971.

³³¹ *Dawn*, 13 February 1971.

He is the first leader of any importance from West Pakistan to have given such unqualified support to the Six Points. He has not only supported the Six Points and the students 11 points, but has further accepted that only the majority has the right to run the administration in the country but also has the responsibility for framing the constitution.³³²

Akbar Bugti was legally forbidden to join a political party for a five-year period; it being a condition of his release in 1969 after having been detained for the murder of Haji Haibat Bugti. Unable to officially join the National Awami Party, he nevertheless attended all the party's Central Committee meetings and played a pivotal role in NAP's success in Balochistan. Not only did he fund the party, he was also one of NAP's key organizers in the 1970 election which resulted in NAP winning three out of four of Baluchistan's national seats. Later he made two of his representatives,³³³ who had been elected as independents to the provincial assembly, join NAP - bringing the number of the party's MPAs to ten.

Later Akbar became keen to put up a candidate for the reserved provincial seat for women from his own area. To his annoyance the NAP Provincial Working Committee rejected his choice and instead opted for Khair Buksh Marri's nominee.³³⁴ It was at about this time that an incident took place during a NAP Provincial Working Committee meeting which would later have disastrous consequences for the politics of Balochistan. As the meeting of the party's highest provincial committee commenced, one of its members, Mahmood Aziz Khurd, raised an objection. He announced the presence of a 'stranger' in the committee room. Akbar Bugti later told me that he looked all around the room, in all innocence, looking for the offender until it dawned on him that the objection was being directed at him. Gathering his Baloch dignity Akbar slowly got up from his chair and walked out of the room without throwing a backward glance. In this short duration he did note, however, that none of his brother Sirdars had come to his defence. Seething with injured pride at the insult that had been so deliberately delivered, he vowed to take revenge on his former colleagues in the NAP.

Mahmood Aziz Khurd was one of Bizenjo's lieutenants and a certain amount of suspicion does arise as to Bizenjo's role in this unfortunate episode. Akbar's at times acerbic disposition probably did not help in his relationship with his colleagues, but the manner in which he was dismissed from the committee meeting would suggest that it had been prearranged. Mahmood Aziz Khurd was hierarchically too junior to personally challenge Akbar Bugti. Knowing Attaullah and Khair Buksh, I believe they would have thought it beneath their dignity to conceive such a plan against Akbar, but in the circumstances they might likely have agreed to it providing it had been at

³³² The Intending *Weekly Review*, 1 March 1971, p. 4.

³³³ They were Sirdar Akbar Khan Bugti's brother Ahmed Nawaz and his son-in-law, Sirdar Chakar Domki.

³³⁴ Fazila Aliani, who became the successful candidate thereby giving the extra seat which delivered the provincial majority to the party.

someone else's suggestive prompting and did not directly involve them. The only person who had the stature to be able to suggest such a course of action was Bizenjo.

Unlike Akbar Bugti, Khair Buksh Marri or Attaullah Mengal, Bizenjo lacked tribal prominence as a birthright. From his early days as a card carrying communist in the late 1930s he developed a passion for politics. He was to participate in the brief fifty-two member lower house of the Kalat Assembly in 1947 when the Khan had declared the state's independence. Later he was a leading member of the Baloch nationalist Ustoman Gal (People's Party) of the Khan's brother, Agha Karim. He came into the national prominence rather late in life. He entered the political limelight in 1966 when the Haroon brothers selected him - as their candidate for the West Pakistan Assembly from their Lyari seat.³³⁵ While his success - as I related in an earlier chapter - led to the downfall of the Haroons as well as Governor Kalabagh, Bizenjo managed to hold on to his seat in the Assembly until November 1967.³³⁶ This was the first time that he had been elected and he took the opportunity to prove his Baloch nationalist credentials in the Assembly by determinedly criticizing the One Unit and the despotic nature of Ayub Khan's government. With the fall of Ayub Khan and the break-up of the One Unit in West Pakistan the political realist Bizenjo had quickly discerned that future success in Balochistan politics lay with its tribal leaders.

Balochistan had lacked the presence of a commanding nationalist leader in the mould of NWFP's Ghaffar Khan. People with nationalist credentials such as the Pushtu-speaking Abdus Sammad Achakzai were unable to exert their influence beyond the boundaries of a localized area. As a consequence there was no one to bring about a political and social awakening among the people of the province who had become mired in a centuries old tribal system. Barren and sparsely populated, the new province's political vacuum rapidly came to be filled by the Sirdars of the various tribes. Among these Sirdars were Attaullah Mengal, Akbar Bugti and Khair Buksh Marri, who not only had large tribes supporting them but over a period of time had established their political credentials as leading Baloch nationalists and had been made to suffer jail terms for their convictions. Upon the breakup of One Unit in West Pakistan these Balochistan leaders began seeking an affiliation with a like-minded political party. As I have mentioned earlier, in 1969 at their request I introduced them to Asghar Khan. For a while these Sirdars seriously considered aligning themselves with Asghar Khan. In the end Bizenjo, who was a senior member of NAP, prevailed upon them to reach an understanding with Wali Khan's party instead.

Bizenjo was well aware that his future political success would depend on the support he would receive from these tribal leaders. The Sirdars - Attaullah, Akbar and Khair

³³⁵ The choice of Bizenjo was based upon political practicalities. As Bizenjo was an outsider from Balochistan, he was in no position to threaten the Haroon family's control of the Lyari constituency of Karachi.

³³⁶ The West Pakistan Election Tribunal ruled that he was not qualified a candidate as his name was not registered in the voting list.

Buksh - had a sole objective which united them in their politics, and that was their desire to safeguard the Baloch racial identity and culture, which they perceived to be under threat from outside influence. This was largely the sum of their Baloch nationalism. Despite Khair Buksh's regular allusions to an eccentric notion of tribal Marxism, he was a Baloch purist first and foremost. The three of them believed in the concept of Balochiyat to the full. On the other hand, Bizenjo's politics were largely dictated by pragmatism. Despite his strong Leftist inclinations his political ambitions had led him to cultivate these Sirdars, but probably in the end three Sirdars probably proved one too many for him. Undoubtedly Akbar's strong streak of individuality had rendered him a maverick in the eyes of some of his colleagues. His abrasive nature had probably not helped him either. Taking advantage of the Bugti Sirdar's growing unpopularity within NAP's general leadership, Bizenjo and his men created the means to arrange a parting of ways. Bizenjo was the quintessential political animal. At times his ambitions would leave even his colleagues momentarily speechless.

In March 1972 Bhutto invited the NAP leadership to Islamabad to discuss proposed changes to the political set-up in Balochistan and NWFP. By all accounts it proved to be a difficult meeting as the two Baloch Sirdars, in particular Khair Buksh Marri, treated Bhutto with undisguised contempt. He is said to have adopted the demeanor of a senior tribal Sirdar compelled to deal with a minor Sindhi *Wadero*, which according to the traditional hierarchy of landed aristocracy, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto undoubtedly was. This rather baffled the urban-dwelling Rafi Raza, who was present at the meeting and later recalled: 'Sardar Marri was throughout abrasive. I do not recall anyone else speaking in this tone to ZAB [Bhutto], nor ZAB being so restrained.'³³⁷ One of the NAP members also at the meeting later told me that when Bhutto offered the governorship of Balochistan to Khair Buksh, the Marri Sirdar coldly turned his face aside without bothering to comment. Bhutto then turned to Attaullah Mengal and offered the office to him. Attaullah observing traditional etiquette replied, 'I would prefer Sirdar Khair Buksh Khan becoming the Governor'. Bhutto once more faced Khair Buksh and requested him to accept the office. Khair Buksh had arrogantly turned his face away from him and haughtily announced that Attaullah should have it. As the offer rotated between Khair Buksh and Attaullah, both determinedly involved in the rigors of tribal decorum, Bizenjo stepped in. He told Bhutto, '*Ye Sardar log hain. Un kay leeyeh aisi chees un kay shaan kay khilaf hae. Aap Mitjhain mauka dain* [They are Sirdars. It is beneath their dignity to accept such an office. Give it to me instead]'. Thus, to the surprise of everyone present, Bizenjo was appointed Governor of Balochistan.

The arrogant attitude of the Baloch Sirdars was a cross Bhutto never bore too easily. It was not the first time he had been subjected to such dismissive treatment. 'Sensitive as he was, he would await the appropriate moment to deal with them. He was known to regularly lash out at the Baloch and the Sirdars in particular in his private

³³⁷ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 153.

conversations. In his occasional meetings with me he would often individually criticize Akbar and Khair Buksh for their supposed intractability and obstinacy. But he never criticized the Baloch race in my presence, no doubt, in deference to my sensibilities.

* * *

Much has been made of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's aberrant character. Everyone seems to agree that the circumstances of his birth, his family and his 'feudal' background came to shape his political persona in later life. At the same time virtually every researcher or biographer of his life has been insufficiently aware of the mores that shaped and defined the rural society into which Bhutto was born. Without exception they have all been outsiders to the social structure that used to be prevalent in rural Sindh.

Much has changed in modern times, particularly so in the last two decades. Social outlook has undergone substantial change. The rankings upon which social hierarchies were based have all but disappeared or have been largely rendered irrelevant. However, it must be remembered that until quite recently, rural society in Sindh, Balochistan and the neighboring areas in Punjab was highly stratified. In essence it was no different to the rest of the subcontinent with its relative obsession with social hierarchy and status. With the exception of tribal Baloch - where each tribe formed its own organizational structure - prominence was based upon titles and size of landholdings. Even among the princely states of British India, acquired appellations and privileges were of paramount importance among the rulers. Their hierarchy was based on titles and the number of gun salutes accorded to each by the British rulers. At the apex of the Indian princely states was, of course, the Nizam of Hyderabad who was entitled to be called 'His Exalted Highness' and whose heir apparent was the only one in the British Empire - other than members of the British royal family - to be allowed the right to be called a prince.³³⁸

Sindh had been ruled by the Baloch dynasty of Talpurs until they were overthrown by British invaders led by Charles Napier. Despite the departure of the Talpurs, some tribal chiefs such as the Sirdars of the Chandio and the Buledi - whose tribes had separately conquered tracts of Sindh in the sixteenth century which became known as Chandka and Bureedka - continued to exert their influence. Others, like the Jams of the Jokios in the south and the Burfat Maliks towards the west, remained influential in their

³³⁸ The Nizam's eldest son was known as His Highness the Prince of Berar. Sons of lesser rulers were known by a mixture of titles, such as Raj Kumars and Nawabzadas. In what became Pakistan there were only three princely states. In Bahawalpur the Nawab's sons were known as Sahibzadas, in Kalat the Khan's sons were called Aghas and in Khairpur the Mir's sons were also addressed as Mirs. Apart from the Prince of Berar no one dared to elevate himself to the regal title of prince as it was forbidden by law though, since Partition we have seen an upsurge in princes (and a new innovation, princesses). For that matter a large number of families have managed to acquire a large number of titles which would not have been permissible in pre-1947 British India. For instance, only two men in the whole province of Sindh were properly entitled to call themselves Sirdars; these were the hereditary chiefs of the Chandio and the Buledi tribes.

areas as well. By the 1920s they were still recognized by the British to be among the premier families of Sindh. In this exclusive list were included the descendants of the Talpur Mirs and religious luminaries such as the Pirs of Pagaro. There was, however, a tendency among a number of these leading Sindhi families to adopt a rather liberal and licentious lifestyle. Education was often treated with a wide degree of lassitude. Consequently, opportunity opened for the minor Sindhi landowning families to improve their fortunes. Education proved to be the key to social advancement. A large number improved their prospects by becoming lawyers, others by pursuing government employment. Soon a new class started rapidly evolving in Sindh. By the time of Partition a number of them emerged at the forefront of local politics.

In the 1919 Government Gazetteer for Larkana mention is made of the prominent families of the district. Foremost was Sirdar of the Chandios, Nawab Ghaibi Khan, who is referred to as 'ranking first among the *jagirdars* and *zamindars* present in Sindh³³⁹ and as such was listed among the 'first class jagirdars' of Sindh. He was followed by another Baloch, a Jamali *wadero* who was ranked next as a '*sardar jagirdar*'. Then the smaller *zamindars* are listed, all of whom are Baloch - such as Talpurs, Legharis and Khosos - with one exception, a Hindu Rao Bahadur.³⁴⁰ These were the families of importance in Larkana area only nine years before Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was born in the district. His family is one of several who subsequently emerged from the Larkana area and entered the political arena over the decades that followed. But it is significant that these families were not considered worthy of mention by the British. In 1919 it would appear that the social hierarchy of Larkana was dominated by the Chandio Sirdar. The next level of society was filled with junior Baloch *waderos* and a solitary Hindu. The remaining unnamed landowning residents of the district were left to fill the ranks of the lesser *waderos*. The preeminence of Baloch in Larkana district would inevitably have had an effect on Zulfikar Bhutto's outlook in the years that followed.³⁴¹ It is the nature of a tribal society that lineage is regarded to be of paramount importance. Despite Bhutto's claim to be a great landowning aristocrat, a Baloch Sirdar, such as Khair Buksh Marri, would have been only too well aware of Bhutto's relatively junior social ranking.³⁴²

It was in fact largely the result of the personal success of Bhutto's father, Sir Shah Nawaz, that brought the Bhutto name recognition beyond the confines of their local

³³⁹ *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind*, B Volume iv (Larkana District), Government Central Press. Bombay, 1919, p. 12.

³⁴⁰ With the exception of the Chandios and Buledis, the Sirdars of all of all other Baloch tribes such as Khosos, Legharis, Marris, Jamalis, Domkis and Magsis were all resident in either Balochistan or Dera Ghazi Khan district.

³⁴¹ Mir was a term found only among the Baloch. Later Bhutto was to this appellation to names of his sons, his tragically ill-fated heirs, Mir Murtaza and Mir Shahnawaz.

³⁴² The Land Reform of 1958 was a great leveler among landowning families. It ended distinctions between great and small zamindars by forcing them down to own similar sized properties. There were of course a large number of evaders, most of them were in Sindh. with a remaining handful in lower Punjab.

district.³⁴³ The actual Bhutto family landholding had resulted from a dispensation given to one of their ancestors named Dodo Bhutta (as Bhuttos were then called)³⁴⁴ during the Talpur period by one of the local administrators of Larkana, Nawab Wali Muhammad Leghari. It is said that the property was given in return for some private favors given to Wali Muhammad Leghari, but one cannot vouch for the authenticity of these reports. In any event, according to official land records Dodo Bhutta and his sons owned a holding of only 6709 acres in their home district of Larkana, a paltry holding for those days when feudal land holdings were normally counted in multiples of tens of thousands of acres.³⁴⁵

After four further generations of Bhuttos, despite the increase of the total family holding over the intervening years to some 31,000 acres³⁴⁶ through purchases, the expansion in the number of family members ensured that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who descended from a junior branch of the family, would receive a relatively minor share of the family property as inheritance from his father. It was only by marrying the only child of his distant uncle named Shireen (later renamed as Amir Begum) that Bhutto was able to obtain a double share of these lands. His first marriage took place while he was still thirteen, his first wife was reputed to be much older than him.³⁴⁷

The other factor that undoubtedly played in Bhutto's psychological make-up was his mother. This fact has already been well-documented.³⁴⁸ His father, Shah Nawaz, married a Rajistani Hindu woman from the scheduled castes as his second wife. Upon marriage Bhutto's mother adopted Islam. In an ideal Muslim society no distinction should be made on the basis of race. Unfortunately, with the strong influence of Hindu culture in the subcontinent, these caste distinctions carry an all-pervasive stigma with them. Even to the present day members of the scheduled castes in Sindh - such as the Bhils, Dheds, Mengwars and Shikaris - suffer extreme discrimination. Undeniably, one of the reasons for Bhutto's hypersensitivity to perceived slights stemmed from what

³⁴³ Later his son Zulfikar Ali would propel the Bhutto name beyond the province of Sindh, by not only making it a household name in Pakistan but also attaining for it wide international recognition.

³⁴⁴ *The Gazetteer of the Province of Sind* (compiled by A. W. Hughes), (p. 477) mentions a population of Bhuttas residing in the Larkana area. The Bhuttas are part of the larger Arrain caste (Sadik Ali, *The Musalman Races Found in Sindh Baluchistan and Afghanistan*, 1901, p. 44). After the introduction of the Sindhi alphabet by Sir Bartle Frere and its usage in Schools within the province, the Sindhi language and the Sindhi man of pronunciation became more widespread. Consequently original name such as Chandiya, Khosa and Bhutta were soon transliterated into Chandio, Khoso and Bhutto.

³⁴⁵ David Cheeseman, *Landlord Power and Rural indebtedness in colonial Sindh*, Curzon Press, London, 1997. p. 56. Later it appears the Bhuttos leveraged their original Ratodero holding of 6709 acres into 21,026 acre in Jacobabad district and 2749 in Naushahro Abro.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 56 (Cheeseman obtained detailed information of the Bhutto's family holdings from official Land Settlement Records of Larkana, Jacobabad and Naushahro Abro districts from the 1890s).

³⁴⁷ According to his biographer Stanley Wolpert. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto m it clear that his first marriage was 'purely for property': Stanley Wolper *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

³⁴⁸ Biographers of Bhutto - such as Stanley Wolpert, Shahid Burki and Salman Taseer - have all emphasized the role that Bhutto's mother played on his psyche.

was no more than an aberrance of birth. It was unlikely that his mother would have been accepted as an equal by the ladies of Shah Nawaz Bhutto's immediate or extended family. As a child Bhutto spent little time in Larkana. At the age of six his parents left Karachi to settle in Bombay where his father joined the Bombay Presidency's legislative council.³⁴⁹

The majority of Bhutto's childhood and all his formative years of adolescence were shaped by the influence of the metropolis of Bombay. His schooling and early friendships belonged to that city. Even when his parents shifted to Junagadh in 1946 Bhutto remained in Bombay. In September 1947 he left India to pursue further education at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles. He made his first visit to the newly-established Pakistan two years later in September 1949 during his university holidays. On his return to the US he shifted his studies to Berkeley University where he completed his degree in political science. At the end of 1950 he moved to England to attend Oxford University. He made his second holiday trip to Pakistan in early 1951. Over the short period of his stay he married for the second time. He returned to Oxford taking his new wife Nusrat with him. While Nusrat returned to Karachi to give birth to their first child, her husband continued with his education in England. Upon completing his law degree he moved to London to attend the bar at Lincoln's Inn. He arrived in Karachi as a qualified barrister in November 1953, a month or so short of his twenty-sixth birthday.

Much has been erroneously made of Bhutto's 'feudal' upbringing. Until his arrival in Pakistan he had spent virtually all his life in Bombay, along with the few years abroad in America and Britain at universities. When he arrived in Karachi in 1953 he could hardly speak Urdu, let alone Sindhi. In reality there was very little that was Sindhi about him - he had with him all the marks of a sophisticated English-speaking Bombayite.

I first met him in early 1954 only a few months after his arrival. He was a dapper dresser and displayed all attributes of a fashionable urban lifestyle. He lived in Karachi, where he worked as a junior at the office of the well-known Hindu lawyer, Ram Chandani Dingomal. Within four short years he had entered the martial law Cabinet and was to continue as Cabinet minister until his ouster in 1966. Until his enforced stay in Larkana from late 1966 onwards, he had in actuality spent very little time in rural Sindh. In the mid-1950s he would make brief trips to Larkana, visiting his farm properties and organizing *shikars* for VIPs. To build upon his rural origins he soon constructed an imposing house in the town of Larkana. It was rather an unusual move as most landholding families preferred to reside in the rural countryside amid their landholdings. The new house gave him presence within the township and proved useful in impressing upon his visitors his Sindhi roots and local standing. During this

³⁴⁹ Sindh continued to be administered by the Bombay Presidency until 1 April 1936.

early period he was extremely keen to make his mark in the political field and determinedly advanced his ambitions by seeking to mingle with Sindhis of influence. These men were not known for their refinement. As one of Bhutto's biographers noted: 'His companions were usually sottish Sindhi landlords, and their inebriated sessions - often [lasted] all night and into the next day...'.³⁵⁰ Bhutto also made a resolute attempt to improve his command of his native tongue. Unfortunately for him, despite the endeavor, his Sindhi remained stilted till the very end of his days.

Having discussed Bhutto's background, it should be reasonably clear by now that the authoritarian streak that Bhutto possessed cannot be attributed to a non-existent 'feudal' upbringing. The viciousness of character that he displayed during his days in power came from deep within his psychological make-up. His intolerance to criticism and sensitivity to imagined slights were caused by insecurities that seemed to have preyed on him. Some of these insecurities may have developed when at a youthful age he became aware of the social implications of his mother's family background. However, the fact that he savored humiliating his own supporters and took pleasure in meting out sadistic treatment to his political opponents cannot even be justified on those grounds.³⁵¹ In the end it was this quality of viciousness that would lead him to his doom. After the 1977 *coup* General Zia made several attempts to placate Bhutto. The former prime minister was unwise enough to openly vent his hatred for the usurping general. It resulted in frightening Zia, who realized that for his own safety he could not allow Bhutto to live and wreak vengeance upon him.

Despite his great many weaknesses one significant point remains to be said. In the last thirty or so years no man has exerted as much influence in the politics of our country as Bhutto has - both when alive and even after his death. Whether one likes it or not, he succeeded in galvanizing the Pakistani masses to an extent that had never been witnessed before. His talented portrayal as a friend of the poor won him the heart of millions of Pakistan's impoverished classes in both the urban and rural areas. The unfortunate manner of his death only added to his mystique, making him a martyr in the eyes of his many adherents. His legacy in his province of birth led to the PPP becoming the only party of choice for the majority of Sindhis for many years that followed. It is the nature of politics that very few, if any, of his die-hard supporters ever knew Bhutto at close hand. They all worshipped him from afar. If they had actually known Bhutto at close-quarters, I wonder, how many of them would have continued to be devoted to him?

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³⁵⁰ S. Taseer, *Bhutto, a political biography*, p. 38.

³⁵¹ On Bhutto's personal instructions a number of his jailed political opponents were subjected to severe sexual humiliation by the police. It would not be proper to name these unfortunate victims, as quite understandably, they would not wish to have their identities revealed publicly.

Despite his pledge to end Martial Law Bhutto insisted that he needed to continue with it for the time being. According to him, the country needed a strong central government to deal with the grave crisis it was passing through in the aftermath of the civil war. Having been a minister in Ayub Khan's Cabinet for eight years, Bhutto was well versed in the exercise of governmental power. With the force of martial law behind him, he introduced his new economic measures such as nationalization of certain industries, and agricultural land reforms. Preliminary talks also were commenced with Indian representatives to formulate a peace agreement and arrange for the return of Pakistani prisoners of war. During this period he also found the time to use his unlimited martial law powers to pursue personal vendettas against amongst others like General Habibullah, Shakir Durrani, Altaf Gauhar and others.

Opposition to Bhutto had however become increasingly vocal in Balochistan and NWFP. In Balochistan the Baloch NAP had accused the local Governor, Raisani, of attempting to bribe a number of elected representatives over to the government's side by offering them advisory posts.³⁵² In NWFP, NAP and JUI had agreed to form a future coalition government in the province. The NWFP provincial elections had led to NAP winning thirteen seats to Qayum Muslim League's ten. The key to forming a coalition government was held by JUI, which had managed to win three seats. Arbab Sikandar Khalil of NAP later revealed to me that JUI had been keen to negotiate with Qayum's party, but Mufti Mahmood, the chief of JUI, had insisted on demanding the chief ministership in return for his support. Abdul Qayum Khan was not prepared to accede to what he felt was in the circumstances a rather high-handed demand. Daggers drawn with Qayum and his party, Wali Khan's NAP decided that it had little choice but to give in to Mufti Mahmood's precondition. And so, the NWFP NAP-JUI coalition was born. Once agreement was reached between the two parties, the necessity of forming their governments in NWFP and Balochistan became their primary concern.

Bhutto knew he could not continue with martial law indefinitely without weakening his political position. He had already made numerous pledges to restore democracy, including one to convene the provincial assemblies by 23 March 1972.³⁵³ In February 1972 the civilian CMLA opened negotiations with NAP and JUI and by 6 March with all the three parties. On 6 March 1972 the three parties came to agreement and signed an accord acknowledging the following points:

- 1) on 1 April 1972 Arbab Sikandar Khalil and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo would be appointed governors of NWFP and Balochistan respectively;
- 2) soon after the NAP-JUI governments would be allowed to be formed in these two provinces;

³⁵² *Dawn*, Karachi, 7 February 1972.

³⁵³ 22 January 1972, 'Statement on Convening Provincial Assemblies' Z. A. Bhutto, *Speeches and Statements*, vol. 1. 20 December 1971-31 March 1972, Karachi, Government of Pakistan, 1972, p. 59.

- 3) the National Assembly would be called into session on 14 April 1972;
- 4) in return for these gestures NAP and JUI would support the continuance of martial law until 14 August 1972 and vote accordingly in the government's favor if this matter was ever raised in the national assembly.

By the time the National Assembly met on 14 April Wali Khan and his political grouping had suffered from a change of heart. NAP and JUI now refused to support the continuation of martial law. Their misgivings had been caused by Bhutto's use of martial law in the large scale dismissal of hundreds of civil servants. Those dismissed had also been denied the right to seek redress in the courts. In NAP's opinion not only had martial law been used to restrict fundamental rights, judicial authority and due process of law, but it also perceived it as a blatant intrusion into provincial authority. A large number of those dismissed were employed in the provinces. Furthermore, another matter had arisen which deeply rankled the NAP-JUI leadership. The commitment made by Bhutto to appoint Arbab Sikandar and Bizenjo as governors on 1 April had not been fulfilled.

* * *

All the elected MNAs gathered at Islamabad by 13 April in time to attend the next morning's inaugural session. I had arranged a room for myself at the government hostel at Islamabad. At about midnight I was disturbed from my sleep by the arrival of a number of unexpected visitors. Among them were Ghous Buksh Bizenjo (NAP), Shaukat Hayat (from the Muslim League), Shah Ahmed Noorani (head of JUP), Mehmood Azam Farوقي (from Jamaat-i-Islami) and Abdul Hakim of Mufti Mahmood's JUI. Much to my surprise they informed me that the various opposition parties had agreed unanimously to nominate me as the joint opposition candidate for the election of the President of the National Constituent Assembly the following day. It appeared that after a series of consultations among the opposition parties it emerged that I was the only candidate that none of them had any objections to. Such are the vagaries of politics. After my visitors left I managed to catch only a few brief hours of sleep before I was disturbed by an early morning telephone call. It was the President's Military Secretary informing me that the President was on the line wishing to speak to me.

Our conversation started quite amiably. Bhutto began by saying, 'I believe the Opposition is putting you up as their candidate against me?' When I replied in the affirmative, he said with a note of exasperation in his voice, 'Couldn't the bloody beards have found someone else? Why pick a friend of mine to stand against me? You know I will win overwhelmingly. What is the point of this needless exercise?'

'Both you and I, and, as a matter of fact, everyone knows that you will win. The election will be a symbol of democracy', I told him trying to reason with him. 'Tomorrow is the first session of new National Assembly. A President has to be appointed. The Opposition is simply exercising its right. And I have been chosen as their representative. What else would you expect?'

'I expect you to withdraw in my favor', he told me.

'I am sorry. I can't do that', I replied.

'Do you realize the consequences', he said with a hint of menace in his voice. Over the years that I had known him this was the first time that he had actually tried threatening me.

'Yes', I rejoined, 'I am now fully aware of the consequences but I'll not bow under your pressure'. He dealt with my rejection by reverting to a tone of friendliness. He reminded me of our past association and friendship. I, in return, continued to appeal to his sense of logic. It turned out to be a fruitless task for both of us. 'Why should it really matter', I said to him. 'You are going to win anyway'.

'I want to be elected unopposed', was his earnest reply. Having failed to convince me, he sounded angry and hurt with me at the end of our conversation.

The crux of the matter was that he wished to be elected unanimously. Despite his long declamations on democracy, his emotional rhetoric of the freedom of speech and other fundamental rights, he simply could not abide any opposition to his views - no matter how mild. When the election took place in the National Assembly Bhutto received 104 votes, while I received 39 (one of which was later declared invalid). Subsequently I came to learn that four members of the Opposition had defected and voted for the PPP leader and two PPP members had secretly betrayed their party leader by voting for me. Later that day four³⁵⁴ of the other independent MNAs got together and unanimously elected me leader of their Independent Group of MNAs.

The tension between the Opposition and Bhutto was palpable on the opening day of the National assembly's first session. It related to Bhutto's determined insistence in continuing with his martial law. The members of the Opposition parties were adamant that now that the National Assembly was officially in existence, democratic norms must return. Angered by their insistence Bhutto resorted to strong-arm tactics. On 14 April Shaukat Hayat, the official spokesman for the opposition parties, was badly beaten up by a pack of PPP *goondas* just outside the chamber of the National Assembly. To

³⁵⁴ Six independent MNAs (including myself) had been elected in the election, but they were soon reduced to five in number - as Malik Muzaffar Kalabagh, Nawab Amir Muhammad's eldest son, decided to throw in his lot with the governing PPP party.

enhance his position Bhutto had directed his governors of Sindh and Punjab to obtain a mandate from all PPP MNAs expressing their confidence in the president and his endorsement of martial law. At the insistence of the Opposition Bhutto produced a document containing a list of 104 MNAs.³⁵⁵ In the document not only had these MNAs backed the extension of martial law but they had all submitted their resignations to Bhutto in maintenance of his martial law. But these efforts were to no avail. The prevalent mood of the public was against the martial law; they had been subjected to it for a period of three long years, ever since the downfall of Ayub Khan in March 1969. Consequently, Bhutto soon realized that he might be forced to give way.

Instead of succumbing to the pressures of democracy, Bhutto chose an inventive alternative. He now offered the Opposition an interim Constitution. It was submitted to us on a 'take it or leave it' basis. The interim Constitution was based on the Government of India Act 1935 and represented a modernized version of the viceregal system of British India which allowed for a parliamentary system in the four provinces. The Opposition was offered a choice of either accepting this draconian but temporary set-up - which temptingly permitted democratically elected provincial governments - or a continuation of the hated martial law. On 21 April the Opposition opted for the interim Constitution. Under the new system:

Bhutto, as President of the republic, was vested with the powers that the British viceroys had enjoyed under the Crown rule. In the provinces, Ministries were established that were responsible not to the provincial legislatures but to the Governors. The Governors, appointed by the President, were responsible only to him and not the legislature.³⁵⁶

The Opposition's feeling were somewhat placated by the appointment of a twenty-five member Constitution Committee of the National Assembly, which included six Opposition MNAs. The Committee, headed by the Minister of Law, Mahmood Ali Kasuri was given the task of preparing a draft Constitution by the end of the year.

The three-year-old state of martial law ended when Bhutto took his oath as president under the interim Constitution on 21 April 1972. Within a week new governments had been formed in the four provinces. In Balochistan Ghous Buksh Bizenjo was appointed governor on 30 April and Attaullah Mengal took oath as the chief minister the following day. In NWFP Arbab Sikandar became governor, with Mufti Mahmood as chief minister. In the PPP ruled province of Punjab, Ghulam Mustafa Khar stayed in his position as governor and Meraj Khalid was made the chief minister. In Sindh Mumtaz Bhutto stepped down from the governorship to take office as the chief minister of the local PPP government, and he was replaced as governor by Rasool Buksh Talpur.

³⁵⁵ Much to Bhutto's fury two PPP MNAs had refused to sign the document. They were Abdul Hameed Jatoi and Darya Khan Khoso.

³⁵⁶ Shahid Javed Burki, *Pakistan under Bhutto 1971-1977*, p. 91.

At the time I had still retained hopes for a brighter future for the country. My opposition to Bhutto had been based upon democratic principles, there was no personal animosity towards him. With the debacle of East Pakistan less than six months I behind us, I strongly believed that Bhutto deserved a fair chance. He was not only an intelligent and extremely talented politician but he had the support of a large number of Pakistanis. For the first time in two decades the army and the bureaucracy were quiescent. A national tragedy had brought with it a rare opportunity for a new beginning. It just needed a capable leader to take charge of the country's destiny and chart a new democratic route. On 22 May I suggested that we should support Bhutto if he chose a constructive course of action. This statement made headlines in some newspapers and convinced a number of people that I had suddenly changed sides. This was of course hardly true. Political idealism was not all that well understood. Within a short few weeks the PPP government unleashed a campaign of terror against members of the opposition in Punjab. One prominent victim was my associate MNA from Dera Ghazi Khan, Dr Nazir Ahmed. In the National Assembly, Nazir Ahmed had made a vehemently critical speech against the army action in East Pakistan. During the military crackdown he had visited the East Wing and returned sadly embittered. He did not mince his words while describing the atrocities committed on the people of East Pakistan. With tears in his eyes he would recount stories of massacres and rapes inflicted by Pakistani soldiers on their own countrymen. At a public meeting held in Rajanpur on 27 May, he openly flayed Bhutto as being the primary cause for the dismemberment of the country and then speaking as a staunch member of a religious party, he took public exception to what he called Bhutto's 'moral turpitude' and accused him of 'licentiousness which exceeded even Yahya Khan's years of womanizing and drinking'.³⁵⁷ The Press had taken to covering Nazir Ahmed's hard-hitting speeches much to the government's embarrassment. A few days later Khar summoned the Provincial Amir of the Jamaat-i-Islami, Syed Asad Gilani, to his office and told him that Nazir Ahmed '*Ka anjaam sahi nahin ho ga* [His fate is not going to be too good]' if he insists on adopting such a hostile attitude. But Nazir Ahmed refused to comply. At 8.30 p.m. on the evening of 8 June 1972, less than two months after the inauguration of the new National Assembly, Nazir Ahmed was shot dead in his home town of Dera Ghazi Khan. Nazir Ahmed was sitting in his homoeopathic clinic when two men arrived on a scooter. One waited outside and stood guard, while the other entered the clinic, fired two shots, then they both fled. The bullets struck Nazir Ahmed in the head and he died soon after.

The case was investigated by the police. When they searched the dead man's pockets they found, an unmailed letter addressed to me.³⁵⁸ After pursuing their enquiries the police charged two men with the crime of murder. Their names were Shah Nawaz

³⁵⁷ At a speech made by Nazir Ahmed at Rajanpur on 27 May 1972: *Zindagi*, 31 July 1972.

³⁵⁸ The letter is still in my possession.

Sadozai and Fareed Ahmed. After the initial court hearing both of them were set at large. At the hearing the Session Judge criticized the police and remarked that their investigations 'seemed to have been intentionally dishonest'. Even the prosecuting attorney admitted in court that the police had botched up the case from the very beginning. The Press took note of this strange sequence of events. One newspaper printed a front page banner headline with the words 'Who is the real murderer of Nazir Ahmed?' Under the headline the newspaper, after lambasting the police for organizing a cover-up, declared the murder to have been politically motivated.³⁵⁹ A number of people were strongly convinced that the murder had been carried out at Bhutto's specific instructions.³⁶⁰

Some days after Nazir Ahmed's assassination I addressed a very large crowd at Pakistan Chowk in Dera Ghazi Khan. It was estimated at 30,000, a mammoth gathering for a town the size of Dera Ghazi Khan. Most of the people present were there for the sake of Nazir Ahmed, rather than a result of any link between them and his political party, Jamaat-i-Islami. The murdered man had been widely liked by the townspeople. At the meeting local members of the Opposition and I demanded that an impartial inquiry be held into the murder, and condemned the PPP Government for its role in carrying out the crime. Later I led processions and made severely critical speeches against the government in various parts of the district. As a result of my actions, I received a message from Islamabad routed through Khar and Sadiq Qureshi. I was told to 'behave or else'. The message served only to increase my fury further. In an angry rejoinder I issued a challenge to Bhutto. I was forty-one then and more capable of bravado at that younger age. In an interview with the weekly *Chatan*, after strongly attacking Bhutto for his repression, I said 'I am not a mild and defenseless person like my late friend Nazir Ahmed. If anyone dares lay a hand on me, I'll smash their teeth'.³⁶¹ This statement was not appreciated in Islamabad, This 'intransigent' behavior on my part led Bhutto to try and resolve the matter by other means.

Khar summoned three junior members of my family to the Governor's House in Lahore. They consisted of my nephew Farhat Aziz Mazari and two paternal cousins of his, Shaukat Mazari and his younger brother, Liaquat - all three of them were politically

³⁵⁹ *Jasarat*, Karachi, 19 June 1972. (The PPP Minister for Information Niazi criticized *Jasarat* and accused it of being highly provocative and inciting violence. After taking legal advice Niazi indicated that action would be taken against *Jasarat*. Bhutto gave his approval for this course of action and noted in writing 'Certainly, this needs to be done'.)

³⁶⁰ After Bhutto's overthrow the FIA made fresh investigations. One Allah Wassaya was identified as the murderer. He had been abetted in the crime by four D. G. Khan Police officers (including the Superintendent Qamrudeen Khan). They were all charged with the offence. Later the accused were released when it emerged that the murder had been carried out on the specific instructions of Governor Khar. Police Superintendent Qamrudeen Khan was said to have assigned the task to two criminals upon being assured by Khar that he (Khar) would take full responsibility for the killing. (Later, according to one source, General Zia decided to keep Dr. Nazir Ahmed's case in reserve just in case Bhutto received acquittal in the Muhammad Ahmed Kasuri murder case: Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, op. cit., p 313.)

³⁶¹ *Chatan*, Lahore, 24 July 1972, p. 19-29 (quote from p. 28).

opposed to my brother Mir Balakh Sher and me. Calling them into his office Khar announced that he had a task for them on 'Sahib's' direct orders - 'Sahib' was a term Khar deferentially used when referring to Bhutto. The task was straightforward he told them: 'Sherbaz Mazari is to be eliminated'.

I gather the three young Mazaris were rendered speechless for some time. Finally my nephew Farhat spoke up. According to him he informed Khar, 'What you ask of us is inconceivable. Not just because he is my *mama* [maternal uncle], but in the tribal society we belong to, he is the elder. Besides, if we did accomplish this deed we would be signing our own death warrants'. Then Shaukat spoke out and openly agreed with his cousin. He told Khar, 'I'm afraid what you ask of us is simply not possible'. Their negative responses seemed to have infuriated Khar who berated them for being 'spineless cowards'. Then turning to the youngest of them, he addressed Liaquat, 'How about you? If you can't kill him then the least you can do is cripple him for life. Just make sure he never walks again'. Liaquat, who had recently become an officer in the Mazari tribal area Border Military Police, replied positively. He told the Governor, 'Leave it with me, Sir! I'll deal with it'. Having heard his younger brother's response, Shaukat told Khar, 'Don't take him seriously. It's just bluster. He is saying it simply to please you, he really won't dare do it'.³⁶²

Shortly afterwards I received an anxious message from a family member asking me to take care. I was to later discover that this message had come indirectly from my nephew Farhat, who despite our political differences had shown concern for my safety. Somehow information leaked out to Khar that Farhat had betrayed his confidence. In spite of his PPP membership Farhat was arrested only a few months later and charged with smuggling weapons and attempting to ferment an armed rebellion in the Mazari area.

* * *

By mid-1972 only a month or so after the installation of the new PPP government in Sindh, the province tumbled into a crisis largely the result of the governing party's creation. The PPP had drawn nearly all its support from the rural Sindhis. In the urban areas, where the *muhajirs* had largely settled, the votes had gone to opposition parties. With the success of the PPP the Sindhis acquired a new feeling of confidence. Demands were soon aired by them for a greater share in the province's economic opportunities. In March 1972 some 2000 demonstrators marched to the Governor's House at Karachi demanding that Sindhi be accepted as one of the national languages of Pakistan and that ninety percent of the radio and television programmes broadcast in the province be in that language. Rather than calm the growing disquiet Bhutto managed to arouse the

³⁶² This meeting was later reported to me by my nephew Farhat, and so years later corroborated in detail by Shaukat Mazari.

animosity of the *muhajirs* by telling them that in some areas of Sindh the refugees had converted indigenous Sindhis into a minority. 'Remember in America, the Red Indians were converted into a minority and history has not forgiven America until today'.³⁶³ Such partisan statements only helped intensify the chances of a looming ethnic conflict.

Bhutto was the first Sindhi politician to become Head of State and central government. His support for the growing Sindhi nationalism was, it has been strongly suggested, a reaction to the traditional typecast of the Sindhi character.

Of some importance in Bhutto's make-up and in the development of his attitudes towards people and institutions was the Sindhi stereotype against which, consciously and unconsciously, he seems to have reacted. This stereotype had been created by the early British administrators, who found the Sindhi character very different from that of the Pathans, the Punjabis, the Brohis and the Baiuchis. Whereas these administrators, when reporting on the people they worked with, had positive things to say about other nationalities, a somewhat less attractive picture was drawn of the Sindhi. He was not credited with the Punjabi's industry, or with the Baluchi's and the Pathan's valour or even with the neighboring Brohi's intelligence... [In] recruiting the Indians, the British army officers drew a clear distinction between what came to be called the 'martial and non-martial' races, and whereas the Punjabis, Pathans and Baluchis were included in the 'martial stock', Sindhis were excluded from it.³⁶⁴

As a Sindhi, Bhutto was undoubtedly keen to redeem his racial heritage. Other leading Sindhis in the provincial government, such as Mumtaz Bhutto, also shared the same objectives. Unfortunately, the rejuvenation of the Sindhis in the contemporary context could only take place at the expense of the *muhajirs*.

Encouraged by his cousin, Mumtaz Bhutto, the Chief Minister of Sindh, soon declared that a bill would be moved in the provincial assembly declaring Sindhi to be the only official language of the province. This immoderate step was at complete odds with the rest of the country. The other three provinces, acknowledging the fact that Urdu was the officially recognized national language of the country, had declared it to be one of the official provincial languages. It is significant that they did so even when they lacked a large presence of Urdu-speaking *muhajirs* within their territories. The Sindh government had purposely chosen a path of confrontation. In doing so, they had clearly underestimated the explosive reaction of the *muhajir* community.

By June official Sindh government forms were being printed in only English and Sindhi, and meetings of the government secretariat were being conducted in Sindhi. The

³⁶³ *Dawn*, 1 April 1972.

³⁶⁴ Shahid Javed Burki, *Pakistan under Bhutto 1971-1977*, op. cit., pp.

provincial government's moves encouraged Sindhis to settle their perceived grievances against refugee settlers in the rural towns and countryside of Sindh. The Sindhis acted with much violence. A large number of *muhajirs* began fleeing the rural areas to seek sanctuary in the urban centre's of Karachi and Hyderabad. Determinedly ignoring the prospect of acute civil disorder and despite the walk out of *muhajir* MPAs, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto allowed his MPAs in the Sindh Assembly to pass the Sindh Language Act on 7 July 1972. Over the next few days mobs of *muhajirs* and Sindhi extremists battled each other and with the police in the streets of Karachi, Hyderabad and rural towns such as Larkana. During these days of heavy rioting, colleges, shops and printing presses were burnt, police stations attacked, and scores of people were killed.

The Federal Government's reaction was decidedly not neutral. When a *muhajir* delegation met with the central government negotiators, the Minister of Law, Hafiz Pirzada told them that PPP government was used to dealing with violent reaction and adding that the Sindhis were quite prepared to take on the *muhajirs*.³⁶⁵ Islamabad's stance only softened when it became aware of the growing resentment developing in the PPP powerbase of Punjab against the crisis in Sindh. News had arrived in Punjab of attacks on Punjabi settlers and molestation of Punjabi women in the interior of Sindh. It is said that Meraj Khalid, the Chief Minister of Punjab, convinced Bhutto that the PPP could not afford to lose support in its political bastion. Bhutto reluctantly concurred and concessions were finally made to alleviate the feelings of the agitated *muhajirs*.³⁶⁶ Eventually a new ordinance was issued which provided that no civil servant could be discriminated against for his inability to communicate in Sindhi or Urdu for a twelve-year period.

As Karachi and Hyderabad were suffering under convulsions of street violence, Bhutto invited a number of opposition leaders to discuss the situation. On 13 July 1972 the invited opposition delegation met with him. The delegation included Shaukat Hayat, Noorani, Mufti Mahmood, Professor Ghafoor and myself. At the meeting Bhutto adopted a posture of deep concern on the situation in Sindh. Denying all responsibility for the events he insisted that the crisis had been the sole making of his cousin Mumtaz Bhutto. He accused his cousin of overreaching ambitions. He told us, 'Mumtaz wants to project himself as a Sindhi nationalist. He got elected on my coat-tails and now wants to build his own support base. His eventual aim is to challenge my supremacy in the province.' Yet a fortnight later, when he toured Sindh to safeguard his political position among the rural population of the province, he appeared totally unrepentant. In his speeches he showed little regret over the loss of life and property and made scant effort to heal the bitter divisions that had arisen as a result of the rioting. During the public meetings:

³⁶⁵ *Zindigi*, 24 July 1972, pp. 10-11.

³⁶⁶ *Outlook*, 12 August 1972.

[Bhutto] insisted that the Sindh Assembly had acted reasonably in passing the language bill, and that the riots had been instigated by the 'reactionaries' (meaning the Islamic parties), who had been trying to dislodge his government since its inception. He said he commanded the power of the state and knew how to use it, and that he would crush those who conspired against his government.³⁶⁷

In the aftermath of the violent language unrest, the leaders of the *muhajir* community had come to certain conclusions. During the days of rioting, which had resulted in death and destruction, neither Bhutto nor his ministers had acted with promptitude to prevent the violence. Instead it seemed evident from their behavior that they had been waiting for the *muhajirs* to admit defeat in the urban warfare and yield to the Sindhi point of view. After peace was finally restored the PPP made little effort to appease *muhajir* feelings. For the *muhajirs* the lesson learnt from this event was that they could only rely on themselves for the future defence of their interests. With no one to intercede between the two communities, the feelings of mutual hostility would only exacerbate with the passage of time. The political foundations for the arrival of a *muhajir* political force had been made, now it waited for a party such as MQM to stake its claim.

* * *

On 28 June 1972 Bhutto flew to India, accompanied by a huge delegation of over ninety people, to negotiate peace with Indira Gandhi. The terms of agreement, finally made at Simla were not all that favorable to Pakistan, but peace was finally concluded between the two hostile nations. In fact under the Simla Agreement Pakistan conceded territory captured by India during the 1971 War to form a new line of control in Kashmir. The agreement also ignored the all important issue of the return of the Pakistani prisoners of war other than to state that at some time in the future 'the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss.. the questions of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees...'. The crucial points agreed between the two leaders were:

Clause (ii): the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them.

Clause (iv): the basic issues of conflict between the two countries ... shall be resolved by peaceful means.

Clause (vi): they will refrain from the threat or use of force against ... each other.

³⁶⁷ Anwar H. Syed, *The Discourse and Politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto*, Macmillan, London, 1992, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

After a decade of being possibly the most rabid war-monger in Pakistani politics, Bhutto had himself finally conceded that the Kashmir dispute was to be resolved only by use of peaceful means. Having played a leading role in the instigation of two disastrous wars, the original progenitor of a call for 'a thousand-year war with India' now returned to Pakistan proclaiming an achievement of profound diplomatic accomplishment. Along with many other Pakistanis, I was pleased that peace had been brought about between India and Pakistan. However, at the same time I wished to use the opportunity to publicly recall the role Bhutto had played in the history of the two neighboring countries. During the parliamentary discussions on the Simla Agreement in the National Assembly I had made the following comments in my speech:

If one compares the oft-repeated Tashkent Agreement with the Simla Agreement, I cannot see in any way that the Simla Agreement is better than the Tashkent Agreement. The Tashkent Agreement was made an emotional issue to whip up mass hysteria in the country. All I can say is, as I said before, I am one of those who believes in peace and I believe in friendship with our neighbors, but it is also worth asking: who has brought about such conditions as are prevailing today? I would like to ask who is responsible for all this trouble that was brought about over in this poor unfortunate country - this confrontation, this war, suffering and misery? If you reflect, in 1970 during the elections, an anti-Indian stance and confrontation on the Kashmir issue was constantly played up. I would like to know who was responsible for creating this sort of emotional issue in the country. Today after you have worked up the emotions of our countrymen, you tell them that we should think about the path to peace. All I can request is: please from now on let us forget criticizing the Tashkent Agreement which was in no case worse than what has happened in Simla... [However] regardless of my views on Tashkent, the Simla Agreement, I feel, was correct and, therefore, I now, in my personal capacity, feel that it is a right step and we should support it.³⁶⁸

My remarks did not please Bhutto. In his Presidential Address to the special session in National Assembly to announce the Simla Agreement he departed from his prepared text to mockingly criticize me.

And now to come to the great Sardar from Dera Ghazi Khan, my Tumandar of whom we are serfs. He asks who is responsible for all this. My Sardar I am responsible! You are not. You do not have any oppressive system in Dera Ghazi Khan. You are not a feudal lord. We are servants; we are serfs. But we are servants of the people. We are not Sardars; we are not Mirs and Maliks and Khans. These are great men... We are low-caste; we are bad people. But we

³⁶⁸ *National Assembly of Pakistan Debates*, Volume II No. I (Monday, 10 July 1972), Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press, Islamabad, p. 51.

belong to the people and we are proud of the people. Hold history responsible; hold the right people responsible; do not give judgment in light vein.

Then he proceeded giving a wordy speech denying all responsibility in the events that led to the civil war and eventual dismemberment of Pakistan. He loftily stated that his role in the Simla Agreement was even more difficult than the one played by Count Tallyrand at the 1815 Congress of Vienna (after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo). During the course of his explanation he interspersed his speech with the occasional sardonic jibe directed at me: 'I am not high caste like our Sardar from Dera Ghazi Khan'. Finally, he turned towards me and said:

Today you say that Tashkent was better than Simla. On what basis do you say that Tashkent was better than Simla? If you come to such feudalistic and obsolete conclusions, Sardar Sahib, let me tell you, my dear friend from Dera Ghazi Khan, that you have misread the mood of the people, that you have miscalculated the courage of the people of Pakistan to have come to that conclusion. We did not exploit Tashkent, we were betrayed at Tashkent...

I had never, at any stage, suggested that the Agreement at Tashkent had been better than the one reached at Simla. Bhutto had simply chosen to misconstrue facts to enhance his strangely specious argument. Veracity was a quality he had little time for.

CHAPTER 6

Balochistan and the UDF

The trampling of the Press under Bhutto had become an issue close to my heart. Over the months I had met with a large number of editors and publishers of the leading dailies and political magazines and gave them all the moral and public support that I was able to. The Opposition parties declared 1 August 1972 as 'Press Freedom Day'. On 28 July Moazzam Ali, the Chairman of PPI, called on me and presented me with a charter of demands calling for the freedom of the Press in Pakistan. Later that evening a meeting of the Opposition parties was held at Maulana Noorani's house where, perhaps in recognition of my efforts in support of Press liberties, I was elected chairman of the Opposition's Press Freedom Struggle Committee. Zahooral Hassan Bhopali was nominated secretary to the committee. On the evening of 30 July a number of us, including Asghar Khan, Maulana Noorani, Azizullah Shaikh and Mehmood-ul-Haque Usmani of NAP, met to finalize our plans for the day of protest.

On the morning of 1 August I hoisted a large black flag above my house as a mark of protest against the government's repression of the Press. Later that afternoon I joined other Opposition leaders as we made our way to Katrak Hall in a large procession. *En route* many scuffles broke out as government agitators tried to impede our progress. The meeting place was packed with people and a large crowd had also gathered outside of those who could not get in due to lack of space. At the meeting the Opposition members, including myself, made critical speeches against the government's open campaign against the Press. I knew that our meeting would not lead to any abatement in the repression of journalists but it was important to publicize their intolerable plight and express public sympathy with the beleaguered journalists.

By mid-1972 the PPP regime policy of repression had become all encompassing. One particular target of Bhutto's vengeful wrath was Asghar Khan. The retired Air Marshal had reached the peak of his public acclaim in 1969 during the movement that had led to the ousting of President Ayub Khan. His popularity of those days had seemed to have left an indelible mark on Bhutto's insecure psyche. Despite the fact that Asghar Khan had suffered a rather humiliating political defeat in the 1970 elections, Bhutto continued to be obsessed by him. On the first day of August Asghar Khan's house in Abbotabad burnt down in extremely suspicious circumstances. About the same time his brother-in-law Colonel Aleem was charged with mutiny and conspiring to overthrow the government. Apparently, the Colonel's only 'crime' was that after the 1971 debacle in East Pakistan he had openly advocated that General Yahya be replaced by Asghar Khan instead of Bhutto. Many others were also made to feel the brunt of Bhutto's vindictive

wrath, including, not surprisingly, myself. By the end of August 1972 strong rumors were circulating about my impending arrest. I would often be phoned by concerned people - including Ghous Buksh Bizenjo, then Governor of Balochistan - simply to find out whether I was still at liberty.

I had never been pleased with the manner in which the House had been blackmailed into accepting the interim Constitution. As an independently elected MNA I was free to pursue my own course of action. My opportunity to retaliate came on 3 September 1972 when Bhutto announced in the Assembly that he had received a large number of resignations from PPP MNAs who were supporting continuation of the state of Martial Law. He had arranged these resignations to display his unchallengeable position of leadership in PPP. I discussed these resignations with my legal advisor, Muhammad Anwar, a noted barrister from Lahore. A writ petition was later filed on my behalf against all the PPP MNAs³⁶⁹ who had signed the document submitting their resignations and requesting an extension of Martial law. Legally it appeared that they had resigned the moment they had attached their signatures to the document. I now wanted the High Court to rule that these MNAs had legally vacated their parliamentary seats, and call for by-elections in thirty-one constituencies. Unfortunately luck was not with me, as the High Court soon proved to be a submissive body lacking in ethical courage. The first official acknowledgement i got from the High Court consisted of a letter I was to receive in October 1978.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to draw your attention to the case cited as subject filed by late Mr. M. Anwar. Advocate, on your behalf admitted to the full hearing of Mr. Justice Shafi-ur-Rahman on 13 September 1972. This matter is still pending adjudication. The matter relates to the election of certain seats in the National Assembly of Pakistan which at present does not exist. You are therefore requested to kindly intimate whether you wish to proceed further with this writ petition, if so, kindly take further steps to file a fresh power of attorney as your counsel, Mr. M. Anwar, has since expired.

Your obedient servant,
Superintendent of Writs.

By that time a lengthy period of six years had elapsed, as the High Court official pointed out, my worthy advocate M. Anwar was no longer with us, and by this time

³⁶⁹ The PPP MNAs who submitted their resignations in support of Marti Law included: Mahmood Ali Kasuri, Minister of Law & Parliamentary Affairs; Dr Mubashir Hassan, Minister for Finance; Maulana Kausar Niazi, Minister for Information; Abdul Hafiz Pirzada. Minister for Education; Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Minister for Communication; Sheikh Muhammad Rasheed, Minister for Health; Khurshid Hassan Mir, Minister without Portfolio; Ghulam Mustafa Khar, MNA; Dr Ghulam Hussain, MNA; Malik Muzaffar Khan, MNA; Abdul Sattar Gabol, MNA; Hakim Ali Zardari, MNA.

Zia's Martial Law had extinguished all vestiges of a democracy, including the National Assembly. It seemed that the High Court had finally considered it safe to retrieve cases that previously it had been too fearful to examine. Sadly, it was a pathetic reflection on the state of the judiciary of those times.

Undoubtedly my filing of the writ in the High Court only served to further irritate the PPP. Events that followed in Dera Ghazi Khan would acerbate the matter.

* * *

The assassination of Nazir Ahmed on 8 June 1972 had created a vacancy in the northern Dera Ghazi Khan National Assembly seat. Under the interim Constitution by-elections should have taken place within sixty days of the vacancy having been created. Wishing to establish more favorable conditions for its candidate - in direct contravention of the law - the government purposely procrastinated. Eventually it was announced that the by-election would be held on 14 November. The PPP candidate was Governor Khar's own nephew, Khawaja Sulieman.

The political situation in the district had changed in one distinct way since the 1970 elections: by now most of the Sirdars had joined hands with the PPP government. The first Sirdar family to go over to the PPP camp were the Legharis. The origins of their move were linked to Sirdar Muhammad Khan Leghari's death in 1971. After his passing away the Legharis had approached my brother Mir Balakh Sher and I with a view to reaching a possible political understanding for the by-election that was to be held in the now vacant provincial seat. In 1970 the Mazari group had put up Farooq Gurchani against the Leghari chief for the provincial elections. In the end he had only been narrowly beaten by Sirdar Muhammad Khan. With the prospect of an impending by-election the Legharis were not confident about the success of their candidate, Sirdar Muhammad Khan's younger brother, Atta Muhammad Khan. On 12 October 1971 we had a meeting with them at the Circuit House at Dera Ghazi Khan. The Mazari Group was represented by my brother Mir Balakh Sher and I, while the Legharis were represented by members of the late Sirdar Muhammad Khan's family, Atta Muhammad Khan (the late Sirdar's brother) and Farooq Ahmed Khan (the late Sirdar's son). My friend, the Tumandar of the Khosas, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, was also present. At the meeting we decided that in memory of the late Sirdar - whom, despite our political differences, we held in regard as a thorough gentleman - we would not put up a rival candidate against Sirdar Atta Muhammad Khan.

I was reasonably sure that Atta Muhammad, once elected would not join the PPP. Sadiq Qureshi who had only recently met Atta Muhammad Khan, while on a PIA flight from Multan, had told me that he had been severely reprimanded by the elder Leghari who

had accused him of having thrown in his lot with *kaffirs* by joining the PPP.³⁷⁰ During our meeting, for the sake of reassurance, I asked Farooq Leghari for a commitment that their successful candidate would not join the government party. Farooq Khan proved to be more circumspect than his uncle on this issue. He declined to make any commitments and instead replied, 'In politics, one can't be sure about anything'. As a result of our decision our candidate, Farooq Gurchani, stepped down from the contest. Afterwards, much to everyone's surprise, the proposed local PPP candidate was not given a party ticket to contest the election. Later during a dinner at Islamabad, Malik Muzzaffar Kalabagh³⁷¹ mentioned to me that he had been able to persuade Bhutto to allow the Leghari candidate to stand unopposed. In return Malik Muzzaffar Kalabagh had promised that the Leghari family would join the PPP *en masse* along with him. And so, once Atta Muhammad Leghari was independently elected as the local MPA he soon became a full-fledged member of the PPP. Such was, and is, the nature of our rural politics. My brother Mir Balakh Sher was the next to go.

Despite the desertions of a majority of local Sirdars to the PPP, the governing party faced an extremely tough battle ahead in the National Assembly by-election. The town of Dera Ghazi Khan and the northern part of the district had little inclination to vote for the PPP. Dr Nazir Ahmed's killing had galvanized sympathy for the opponents of the government. When the combined Opposition parties had agreed to support my friend Sirdar Zulfiqar Khosa as their candidate, his victory appeared a virtual certainty. Khar, the uncle of the PPP candidate, was well aware of the dim prospects that faced his nephew and resolved to do something about it. At first Khar contacted my brother Mir Balakh Sher, now a PPP MPA, and asked him to use his influence to dissuade me from opposing his candidate. According to Mir Balakh Sher who met me a few days later on 21 August, Khar had told him that 'he would break ballot boxes to ensure his nephew's success'. Khar went on to threaten that he would make life impossible for my family and the Mazari tribe until I either changed my mind or left the district.

I had first met Khar in 1962 in Bhutto's company. He had only recently been elected to the National Assembly and had already adopted Bhutto as his mentor and role model. Khar had come from a relatively minor rural family in Muzaffargarh. His father had been a farm employee of the Gurmani family. With the forced decline in Nawab Mushtaq Gurmani's political fortunes Mustafa Khar had been selected by the Ayub Khan regime to depose Gurmani in his own constituency. Relatively uncultured by urban standards, Khar groomed his persona on the style and mannerisms of his mentor. He gradually improved his command of spoken English and slowly learnt to carry himself more confidently in refined company polishing his social graces mainly during his exile in the UK. I recall that in late 1962 he got his first mention in the press. He carried the newspaper with him for a number of weeks, showing it to people as a mark

³⁷⁰ Sadiq Qureshi with his usual artful humor related his encounter with Atta Muhammad Leghari to me.

³⁷¹ Muzzaffar Kalabagh's brother was married to Sirdar Muhammad Khan Leghari's daughter.

of new found distinction. Over the years his emulation of Bhutto would lead him to be ruthless towards anyone who opposed his master's will. In time his forcible acquisition of power in the Punjab would feed the insecurities of Bhutto and would lead to his downfall. But in 1972 Khar, as governor of Punjab, at the height of his power was determined to win the Dera Ghazi Khan by-election by proxy, in the name of his nephew.

As soon as the date for the by-election was announced truckloads of police were sent into the Mazari area in the southern part of the Dera Ghazi Khan district - an area which was not even part of the by-election constituency. Within a period of a few days, over 150 people were arrested on an assortment of bogus criminal charges, some patently ludicrous.³⁷² A number of my relatives, including the PPP-supporting nephew of mine, Farhat, were among those arrested. Much to the embarrassment of my brother Mir Balakh Sher, despite his having joined the PPP, several of his farm staff were also hauled up by the police. Notables of the Mazari tribe and other prominent people belonging to the local area were harassed by the marauding police and a large number of them were detained on false charges. The whole purpose of the police exercise was to show the powerlessness of the Mazari chiefs in face of the PPP government. No stone was left unturned in trying to achieve this objective.

On 11 October I was accused of possessing illegal weapons and charged under the Ordinance Act Arms. I was at home at Karachi and spoke to M. Anwar, my lawyer, who advised me to go immediately to Lahore and apply for bail before arrest. On 12 October I arrived at Lahore and consulted M. Anwar who was insistent that I avoid arrest by going into hiding, which was by now a common political practice. That evening while I was at my sister's house my brother-in-law Bashir Mazari informed me that a number of policemen sitting in jeeps were keeping a watch on his residence. On 13 October I went to M. Anwar's office where Shaukat Hayat joined me. That afternoon after some delay, Justice Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain of the Lahore High Court allowed me a grant of bail before arrest. The very next day I was approached by Nazir Fatehuddin, the Intelligence Bureau chief of Lahore and a member of my old school R1MC. He asked me to meet with Khar to settle our 'differences'. I refused point-blank.

The Dera Ghazi Khan Deputy Commissioner had been replaced by Jivan Khan, who had been the Secretary of the provincial Revenue Board. A new hand-picked Police Superintendent named Riaz Ahmed Sipra was also brought in to deal with the opposition. Sipra was known for his brutality and loyalty to his political superiors.³⁷³

³⁷² For example, my farm manager Gamun Dushti - who had lost a leg to cancer - was accused of participating in a buffalo theft.

³⁷³ There had been several incidents which had led to Sipra's notoriety. During the 1966 riots he dealt with journalists by confiscating all their cameras, which he then destroyed by having a truck driven over them. Later in 1970 he was involved in a well-publicized drunken brawl in one of Karachi's nightclubs before acquiring further infamy for brutality in East Pakistan.

All the police *thanedars* in the constituency were supplanted by specially chosen newcomers. A period of intimidation and terror commenced. A large number of Opposition supporters were arrested. Two months before the date announced for the by-elections Khar sent two provincial ministers, Mukhtar Awan and Mumtaz Kahloon, to Dera Ghazi Khan to take charge of the PPP campaign. The pair of them began addressing public meetings offering government benefits to those who pledged support to the PPP candidate, while at the same time threatening those that opposed him with dire consequences. Accounts, confirmed by newspapers, told of very poor attendance at these meetings. They were reported to be attracting crowds of no larger than 100 to 150 people.³⁷⁴ On 23 October 1972 a large meeting was scheduled to be held at 4 p.m. at Gol Bagh in the Dera Ghazi Khan township. When the organizers became aware of poor attendance they desperately postponed the meeting to 5 p.m., later they put it off until 6 p.m. Eventually when reality of the situation dawned upon them they were forced to call the meeting off altogether.

By now I had been elected convener of the election committee for the joint Opposition candidate for the Dera Ghazi Khan seat. At that time there was only one certainty. The by-election was safely in the Opposition's hands-even if the ballot boxes were stuffed against us - and the government was aware of this fact. Clearly, they would have to resort to other means to achieve their goals if they wished to be successful. My involvement with the by-election affairs was interrupted in mid-October and as leader of the Opposition's Independent group I had to fly to Islamabad to attend the constitutional talks between the government and the Opposition leaders. Despite a brief and heated flare-up on the second day of the session between Bhutto and myself, his behavior during these meetings remained extremely jovial and friendly, and surprisingly, especially so towards me. It was as if nothing had happened between us. This was a facet of Bhutto's nature that bewildered a large number of people. To him politics was a game of poker and he believed that he could outwit everyone with his duplicity. These discussions between the Opposition and the government led to what then became known as 'the constitutional accord'. I will soon describe these constitutional talks in more detail.

While at Islamabad I discussed the Dera Ghazi Khan by-elections with all the other opposition leaders. Mufti Mahmood said to me that he had received a delegation of JUI members from Dera Ghazi Khan insisting that as the Jamaat-i-Islami was supporting Zulfiqar Khosa, the JUI should nominate their own candidate. Despite his party's resistance I, not only, got a commitment from the JUI leader that his party men would support Zulfiqar Khosa but also, in the event our candidate's papers were illegally rejected, the JUI would boycott the by-elections. On 21 October, I came to know that my friend Zulfiqar Khosa had been forced to withdraw from the Dera Ghazi Khan by-election. As a newspaper later reported 'His name by fortunate coincidence did not

³⁷⁴ *Jassrat*, Karachi, 16 October 1972.

happen to figure in the electoral list and no amendment was permitted'.³⁷⁵ In reality, his name had been deleted from the electoral list. After all the work that we had done it came as a bitter disappointment but it was not unexpected. Khar had staked his reputation on the by-election and faced with a resounding defeat on his hands he took the only course of action 'open' to him. That very day I flew to Lahore and met with Mian Tufail, the Amir of Jamaat-i-Islami and presented him with a document calling for a total boycott of the by-election in protest of the government's electoral manipulation. The document had been signed by the leaders of the NAP, JUI and JUP. Eventually, when Khar's nephew won the by-election on 16 November there was a complete boycott of the election by the Opposition parties.

On 23 October, while I was still at Lahore, I was invited by Bhutto to meet him at the Punjab Governor's House at Lahore. I was taken to his sitting room where he was waiting for me. Playing the role of an old friend Bhutto asked after my family. Then he said, 'Is there anything you want or that I can do for you?' I told him that in life all I wanted was to retain my self-respect. Not taking 'no' for an answer he then told me that he wished me to be the governor of Balochistan. To me this offer smacked of an obvious ploy to create a rift between my friends and I in the NAP and I quickly declined it. Then he proceeded to apologize for Khar's actions in Dera Ghazi Khan, adding that it was all very regrettable. He said words to the effect that, 'Khar [was] a bit of an upstart who still had to learn how to behave properly'. Then he summoned Khar, and introduced me as his 'dear friend'. In my presence he gave instructions to Khar. He told him to 'make sure to protect Sherbaz's interests from now on'. I left the meeting convinced that Khar had not been acting independently at all.

* * *

The proposed constitution posed a dilemma of sorts for all concerned. Under the accord of 6 March 1972 a twenty-five member constitution committee had been set up in the National Assembly. The committee had been assigned the task to provide a draft constitution that was acceptable to all concerned. With Bhutto at the helm of affairs this was to prove an exceedingly difficult task. It was clear to most that Bhutto was keen to adopt a presidential form of government, with himself at the apex with sweeping powers. Most members of the PPP and its supporting parties, such as Muslim League (Qayum Group) would naturally have followed his wishes. The Opposition was insistent upon a Westminster form of parliamentary government. With his two-third majority in the Assembly, Bhutto could easily have forced through a constitution in line with his wishes. But, skilled in politics as he was, he was well aware that a constitution chosen and passed into existence by a single party would lack credibility. To give the new constitution 'legitimacy' it required an impression of broad national consensus. And to gain this 'national consensus' he needed the cooperation of the Opposition.

³⁷⁵ *Outlook*, 3 December 1972.

The initial resistance came from within the PPP. The chairman of the constitution committee, Mahmood Ali Kasuri the Law Minister, soon turned out to be an advocate of greater civil liberties and fundamental rights. This led to serious divergence of views between him and his authoritarian leader. Bhutto avenged himself by effectively sidelining Kasuri from his ministerial responsibilities. In early October 1972 Kasuri resigned from the cabinet in protest. Much to the consternation of the Opposition he was replaced by Hafiz Pirzada. Pirzada was then regarded as a Bhutto acolyte with no independent views of his own. Having failed to properly address the issues by the committee system Bhutto now decided to call for a meeting of all the parliamentary leaders.

The constitutional talks between the government and the Opposition began on 17 October 1972. I arrived in Islamabad on 16 October. As my relationship with the NAP leaders of Balochistan was exceedingly close at the time, I was picked up at the airport by Governor Bizenjo in his official vehicle, who insisted that I stay at Balochistan House with him as his guest. Next morning there was a meeting with the various leaders of the Opposition scheduled to meet with Bhutto later that day. Among those present were Arbab Sikandar Khalil (then the NAP governor of the NWFP), Sirdar Shaukat Hayat, Maulana Noorani, Professor Ghafoor, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and General Jamaladar (representing the FATA MNAs). During our discussions it became apparent that both Shaukat Hayat and Bizenjo were extremely keen that our constitutional negotiations with the government went successfully. They both pleaded with the rest of us to exercise tolerance and understanding towards the government proposals. After the meeting we headed directly for the Presidency.

Bhutto greeted us in a very friendly manner. Turning towards me he said to the others, 'Sherbaz is an old friend of mine. Unfortunately, in the recent past we seem to have drifted away from each other'. Then smiling, he added, 'Today I want to make up with him'. Accompanying Bhutto on the government side were J. A. Rahim, Hafiz Pirzada, Sheikh Rasheed and Abdul Qayum Khan. The first day of our discussions went by in an agreeable and congenial manner. As we were leaving, in a display of amity, Bhutto mentioned to me that he would like the two of us to meet sometime soon. That evening I accompanied Arbab Sikandar Khalil as his guest to Peshawar. We drove by car and were joined by Ajmal Khattak, Acting General Secretary of NAP.

Over dinner at the Governor's House Arbab Sikander related a rather strange and unsettling story to me. It seemed Bhutto had recently visited Peshawar and while staying at the Government House had requested Arbab Sikander for a supply of whisky. The Governor told me that he had politely informed Bhutto that as he did not imbibe alcohol he was unable to provide the president with liquor. Bhutto then sent his airplane to Islamabad to fetch whisky. When the plane returned that evening it not only brought the alcohol but a federal minister's wife to keep Bhutto company. I must admit

I was quite appalled by the tale. Arbab Sikander was a man of sterling character and it was simply not in his nature to indulge in gossip. The purpose of his relating this episode to me was not only to highlight Bhutto's arrogant disdain for the feelings of one of his closest supporters, but also the abject servility of the minister who willingly provided his wife.

Later that night I received a telephone call at the Governor's House from the presidency. It was Bhutto who had somehow discovered that I had gone to Peshawar with Arbab Sikandar. Laughing over the phone he told me, 'What's this Sherbaz. First you insist on mixing with the "beards", and now I find you are travelling in the company of "traitors".' I gathered from his conversation that he was concerned that I might not be planning to attend the following day's session. I reassured him that I would reach Islamabad in time for the meeting.

The next morning, 18 October, we returned to Islamabad and joined the other Opposition members at the Presidency for our continuing constitutional discussions with the government. When the government side insisted that the proposed constitution include a two-thirds majority for dismissing a government in a vote of confidence in parliament I was vocal in raising an objection. I rather emphatically stated that such a procedure was unheard of in any other existing parliamentary form of government where only simple majority sufficed for dismissal of government. At this point Bhutto lost control. In a rancorous and shrill voice he began threatening me in front of everyone present. He said, 'You might be a friend of mine but I will not spare you if you oppose me on this'. Not being known for a cool temper I heatedly retorted, 'You can do your worst for all I care. I fear only God and no one else'. To reduce the level of angry emotions that had suddenly arisen, Bizenjo quickly took me aside. Taking me to a corner of the room he pleaded passionately, 'For God's sake do not oppose this point. Don't you realize that the NAP needs it as well. Both in Balochistan and the Frontier, our governments are at the mercy of the Mullahs. They can pull the rug from us at anytime if we stick to a simple majority vote'. It now dawned on me that if both the PPP and NAP were agreed on this point, my opposition had suddenly become quite redundant. Bizenjo and I then rejoined the proceedings. For the rest of the day I remained silent knowing my opposition held little value.

During this second session some valuable points of the agreement were made. Bhutto finally acceded to a parliamentary form of government. Some of the other salient features of agreement included: the designation of Islam as the State religion of Pakistan (as a concession to the religious parties), the creation of a council of common interests to rectify provincial grievances regarding the distribution of water, revenue from the sale of natural gas and minerals, and industrial development. In return and this grated with me - the Opposition agreed that for the next ten years a two-thirds majority vote would be required in the National Assembly to pass a motion of no-confidence against a prime minister. They also conceded the right of a prime minister to dissolve the Assembly at

any time-even during a budget session or when a motion of no-confidence was being debated. In short, it was my belief, the Opposition had virtually agreed to allow Bhutto an unstinted ten years of power.

That evening Bhutto invited me over for a chat over a meal. He led me through his bedroom, where Nusrat and his younger daughter were sitting, into his dressing room. While we sat there and talked he sent Rafi Raza to fetch drinks and cracked a joke over my usual request for a coke. Over the years Bhutto never approved of my teetotalling habit. I suspect it made him somewhat uneasy as most drinkers are prone to let their guard down after a number of drinks. After a few drinks Bhutto became surprisingly sentimental and talked about old times. The oddity of the situation did not however escape me. Here I was with an old acquaintance whose minions were engaged in persecuting me and my supporters in Dera Ghazi Khan, even, as I later learnt, to the extent of trying to have me killed by members of my extended family.³⁷⁶ Clearly, these actions had been done with my host's approval and at his behest. But neither of us alluded to these events. Such is the uniquely peculiar nature of our social culture.

Later that evening Bhutto tried to justify his dismissal of Air Marshal Rahim Khan, knowing that he was a good friend of mine. Bhutto said that Iqbal Shahban had warned him that Rahim Khan had said that he and General Gul Hassan would control Bhutto's Martial Law government from behind the scenes. As such a situation was totally unacceptable to him, Bhutto said, he had no choice but to remove the two armed forces chiefs. It turned out to be a congenial evening only marred by Bhutto's attempt to purposely annoy his wife, Nusrat. He confided to me within Nusrat's hearing that the wife of senior Punjab politician insisted on showering him with gifts. While he claimed to be annoyed by this lady's attentions it was rather apparent that it was simply an excuse to make his wife jealous. Bhutto was known to indulge in playing with people's emotions, even his close family members were not to be spared.

The following day, 19 October, the constitutional consultations became quite contentious as the NAP governments of Balochistan and NWFP demanded their share of revenue from the federal government. It was finally agreed that Balochistan would receive Rs. 7 million in royalties and Rs. 55 million in excise duty. NWFP, whose case was pleaded by Ghulam Faruque, would be given royalties and its share of electricity from Tarbela and Warsak Dams. 20 October was the final day of our discussions. Both Bizenjo and Shaukat Hayat were determined that the rest of us go along with Bhutto's constitutional proposals. There was a lot of publicity given to the political accord. There was a photo session of all the participants and later both Arbab Sikandar and I were interviewed on TV. That evening Bhutto held a celebratory dinner at the Presidency. He was once more in a jovial mood. Before the evening was over he smiled broadly and announced, 'Sherbaz is once again my friend'. Bizenjo in a humorous rejoinder said, 'I

³⁷⁶ Incident is related in Chapter 5.

hope that does not mean that I will lose his friendship'. In politics I was soon to discover that 'friendship' is often a hollow and much abused word.

With the major Opposition parties in agreement there was little a leader of the independent group of MNAs could achieve on his own, and thus, despite my sense of disquiet, I signed the document which represented the 'constitutional accord'. Bizenjo's efforts at achieving the accord met with the disapproval of many members of his party. In November, both Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri expressed their deep disenchantment with what they believed was Bizenjo's complete acquiescence to Bhutto's demands. In December 1972 the national council of NAP forced him to resign from the Constitution Committee in the National Assembly. Perhaps Bizenjo had been trying to achieve some sort of political equilibrium with Bhutto for the sake of future harmony between the NAP provincial governments and the PPP, Hindsight would prove that whatever chances he had of appeasing Bhutto were doomed to failure. Bhutto could not abide sharing power with anyone, let alone elected representatives of the country's two politically and economically minor provinces.

* * *

Unlike Bizenjo, who was a versatile politician, Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri were not known for bothering overly much with political delicacies and were openly contemptuous of Bhutto. Earlier Attaullah Mengal had snubbed the ever sensitive PPP leader by refusing an invitation to accompany the president to Simla for the Indo-Pakistan summit. By October even Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, the Sindh chief minister, was complaining about him. In newspaper reports headlined 'Mengal Ignores Me', Mumtaz Bhutto protested that the Balochistan chief minister not on!') ignored protocol by refusing to inform him of the schedule of his regular visits to Karachi and other parts of Sindh, but that he had also not bothered to respond to a dinner invitation issued by him.³⁷⁷ These two Baloch leaders distrusted Bhutto's intentions towards them right from the outset. Their evaluation was not incorrect. In my meeting with Bhutto in Lahore on 23 October he had made a rather blistering verbal attack on Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri.

Not inclined to observe the formalities of democracy, Bhutto wanted all power to be consolidated in his own hands. The independent NAP governments in Balochistan and the NWFP remained a complete anathema to him. Consequently, the political situation in Balochistan remained volatile from the date of the inception of the NAP government. Within days of coming to power members of the NAP were complaining of attempts by Islamabad to destabilize the Balochistan government. Soon after the installation of the new government a pro-government political procession was challenged by Muslim

³⁷⁷ *Leader*, 10 December 1972 / *Star*, 10 December 1972.

League (Qayum Group) supporters in the streets of Quetta. A clash took place, resulting in one death and several casualties.

Qayum Khan's Muslim League (Qayum Group) had being spurred on by Bhutto to take on Attaullah Mengal's administration. The main proxies representing the Centre's interests in this confrontation were Sirdar Doda Khan Zarakzai, chief of the Zehri tribe and Jam Ghulam Qadir of Las Bela. These two tribal leaders had previously benefited as members of Muslim League (Convention) during Ayub Khan's ten year regime and had strongly opposed the emerging force of Baloch nationalists, who had later merged and become the Balochistan wing of NAP. But Doda Khan and Jam Ghulam Qadir were not the only ones already enlisted by Bhutto in his strategy to weaken the NAP provincial government. There was one other. In Akbar Bugti, who was yearning to get his revenge from his former allies in the NAP, Bhutto would find himself an extremely useful protagonist.

As I have already mentioned Bhutto had already tried to widen the existing gulf between my friend Akbar and myself by offering him governorship of Balochistan in early March 1972 which Akbar had wisely declined. A few days later Akbar Bugti accompanied Bhutto, as a member of his delegation, on a state visit to the USSR. Prior to their departure the Press reported that soon 'President Bhutto, it is learnt, will conclude a "mutual friendship treaty" with Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti'.³⁷⁸ Once in Moscow Akbar decided against returning to Pakistan and instead went into a state of self-imposed exile in London. He had left the country in an embittered mood and was convinced that after years of serving the Baloch cause he had been betrayed by Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri. Akbar was also extremely upset that his younger brother, Ahmed Nawaz, had opted to stay with the NAP government as the provincial minister for finance. On 28 July 1972 a worried Nabi Buksh Zehri came to see me. He informed me that Akbar had sent a message to his son Salim³⁷⁹ ordering him to take rather drastic measures against his uncle if he refused to resign his ministership and provincial assembly seat.

A few months later, in early September, I was to receive a deeply moving and affectionate letter from Akbar in London. It was apparent from his mood that he was saddened by the state of events. After wishing me luck he ended the letter by saying, 'I don't think we will ever meet again ... love, Akbar'.³⁸⁰ My friendship with Akbar went as far back as my teens. I had always had great affection for him and after reading his letter I felt grieved at my friend's current plight. But knowing him as I did I knew his state of despondency was just a passing phase, his feelings of anger would quickly resurface and I was quite positive that we would meet again. And we did, when I received him at Karachi airport on 10 December that year. One thing I think should be

³⁷⁸ *The Star*, 15 March 1972.

³⁷⁹ Nabi Buksh Zehri's daughter was married to Salim, Akbar's eldest son.

³⁸⁰ The letter was dated 29 August 1972.

said about my friend: once he made up his mind, nothing could ever make him change it. He made an implacable foe.

The disruptive forces in Balochistan soon began their attempts to destabilize the provincial government. By 3 October Bizenjo was confessing to newsmen that Sirdar Doda Khan Zarakzai had formed a 'parallel government' in Jhalawan area of Kalat district³⁸¹ and was in a state of near rebellion. A force of Kalat levies was sent to deal with the situation. In early December Salim Bugti surrounded the provincial secretariat with a large number of Bugti tribesmen in an attempt to force his uncle, the provincial minister for finance, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, to resign from his office. By 3 December over a hundred Bugti tribesmen had been arrested by the government. On that day I received Attaullah Mengal and Bizenjo on their arrival in Karachi. They informed me that Salim had actually entered the secretariat and had threatened to break down the door to his uncle's office. After the arrest of most of his people Salim had withdrawn to Bugti House, Quetta, and surrounded himself with a dozen armed men.

Earlier, Attaullah Mengal and Ahmed Nawaz Bugti had travelled to London in an attempt to soothe Akbar Bugti's injured feelings. On their return in 8 October they informed me that they had failed in their mission as Akbar had proved to be irreconcilable. Shortly afterwards Salim Bugti went on the warpath and addressed a press conference accusing the Balochistan chief minister of trying to bribe his father in London to join the Balochistan government.³⁸² At the press conference it was reported that Salim had been accompanied by his father-in-law, Nabi Buksh Zehri. At Islamabad, on 19 October, while I was attending the constitutional discussions with the government, Bizenjo informed me that he had received a warning that Salim Bugti was engaged in a conspiracy to blow up the gas refinery at Sui. Concerned with the news, Bizenjo said that his NAP government had increased the security at the plant.

Some days later, on 21 October, Salim Bugti called on me while I was passing through Lahore. I took the opportunity of trying to warn Salim of the dangers of playing into his father-in-law, Nabi Buksh Zehri's hands. Zehri, a member of Muslim League (Qayum Group), was an active opponent of the NAP's Balochistan and had suffered as a consequence. Zehri, who according to one writer, '[had] supported successive Islamabad regimes politically in exchange for government licenses and credits',³⁸³ held the monopoly of marble-quarrying in Balochistan. In recent months the NAP government had cancelled a large number of his leases, further antagonizing the businessman turned politician. Salim, who was only a young man of twenty-five then, confessing to his helplessness told me that he had been acting directly on his father's instructions. In December that year, after the arrest of Bugti tribesmen bent upon invading the provincial secretariat at Quetta, the government refrained from taking any

³⁸¹ *Outlook*, 14 October 1972.

³⁸² *Sun*, 15 October 1972.

³⁸³ Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow*, Carnegie Endowment. York. 1981, p. 163.

direct action against Salim largely out of respect for his father. While Salim remained in the fortified Bugti House at Quetta surrounded by armed police, Bizenjo dropped in at my house at Karachi asking me to fly to Quetta and get Salim to meet with the NAP leaders so that 'they could reason with him'. I expressed my reluctance. As Salim was acting more or less according to his father's wishes, I believed it would not be proper for me to interfere in what had essentially been a family disagreement between Akbar and his brother Ahmed Nawaz. Besides it would have been pointless discussing it with Salim as he had little alternative but to obey his father's instructions.

On 10 December I went to the airport to receive Akbar Bugti at Karachi airport, accompanied by my sons Sherazam and Shehryar, who was visiting home during his university vacations in New Zealand. From the airport we went to Nabi Buksh Zehri's house where Akbar was being put up. At Zehri's house a large number of the anti-NAP group from Balochistan were present to welcome Akbar back to Pakistan, led by Doda Khan Zarakzai. At this gathering Akbar openly blamed Attaullah Mengal and Bizenjo for all his troubles. The next day Akbar came to see me at my house and we had a long and private discussion on the situation in Balochistan. My friend Air Marshal Nur Khan, a man of proven ability and judgment, also joined us, and we both tried to persuade Akbar to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. The Bugti chief seemed totally irreconcilable. He was adamant in wanting his brother's resignation and nothing else would suffice. I found myself caught in the middle; while I wholeheartedly supported the NAP government of Balochistan, Akbar was one of my oldest of friends.

Later after attending a session of the National Assembly I left Islamabad for Quetta where I met Akbar again on 5 January 1973. Akbar had launched on a rather vitriolic campaign of press interviews against the Balochistan government which had upset me. After his return from London he made many announcements. He had declared that during some of the NAP meetings he had attended before their formation of government, the party leaders had discussed plans for the breakup of West Pakistan. He further alleged that the NAP government was smuggling a vast cache of arms which it planned to use in a secessionist movement and was arming a large private army in the Bhambhore hills. I told him that while I realized the extent of grievances he held against the provincial NAP leadership, some of these allegations were wide of the mark. I warned him that he was unwittingly becoming a tool in the hands of Bhutto. Akbar seemed irritated with my rather blunt comments and insisted that he would continue to do what he thought was right in the circumstances.

In early February there was an armed uprising in Las Bela at the instigation of Bhutto, with Jam Ghulam Qadir acting as the federal government's proxy. Communication was cut off from the area as the rebels severed the telephone wires. Parts of Kalat were soon in near chaos. When the provincial government requested assistance from the local militia, the commander, Brigadier (later General) Naseerullah Babar, refused to provide any help. Babar informed the provincial authorities that as he and his militia came

under the control of the central government he could only act under instructions issued from Islamabad later history would reveal Babar to be an ardent Bhutto loyalist.³⁸⁴ Finding itself powerless against the intransigence of the federal government, the NAP government resorted to raising an irregular force of levies from local tribes to quell the rebellion. Thousands of 'volunteers' from partisan tribes were inducted and armed by the provincial government. When this body of men arrived in the Las Bela region the federal government denounced the provincial government for participating in 'an inter-tribal dispute'. Attaullah Mengal was accused of raising his own private lushkar. Having masterminded the scenario Bhutto now chose to play his counterstroke. He ordered the army into Las Bela to deal with the provincial levies.

On 7 February 1973, Attaullah Mengal suffered a serious bout of illness and the chief minister was flown to Karachi for treatment. I met him at Karachi's OMI hospital on the following day. Attaullah Mengal was enraged with Bhutto. He had been well aware that the uprising in Las Bela had been deliberate and at the behest of Islamabad. His retaliatory action of sending provincial levies had conveniently provided Bhutto with a pretext to send federal forces into Balochistan. Faced with a crisis, as he lay on his hospital bed, I helped him to prepare a press statement, which was later issued. The statement harshly condemned the dispatch of the army and criticized the government for falsely justifying that the army had been sent to disarm illegally armed volunteers. By 9 February, Kalat was effectively isolated from the rest of the province. When the governor of the province, Bizenjo, tried to contact the Deputy Commissioner he found himself unable to do so. There were bold three-inch headlines in one of Karachi's afternoon papers the following day announcing 'Kalat Cut Off'.³⁸⁵

On the morning of 9 February a very depressed Bizenjo called on me, after which we both went to meet Attaullah Mengal. The situation in Balochistan looked increasingly bleak and there appeared to be little the provincial government could do to resolve it. Latest reports indicated that the army action was now spreading from Las Bela to adjacent areas in Kalat. That evening we once more got together to discuss the situation. This time we were joined by Air Marshal Nur Khan and Maulana Noorani. Rasool Buksh Talpur, then the PPP governor of Sindh, also arrived there to express his sympathy.³⁸⁶ During the meeting my friend Nur Khan used all his powers of persuasion to try and convince Attaullah Mengal to be less unyielding in dealing with Bhutto and become agreeable to attending the impending Governors Conference. He did not succeed as Attaullah Mengal distrusted Bhutto and saw little point in making compromises.

³⁸⁴ General (retd.) Naseerullah Babar would later serve Bhutto's daughter Benazir, as her steadfast Minister of the Interior.

³⁸⁵ *Leader*, Karachi, 10 February 1972.

³⁸⁶ Rasool Buksh Talpur soon resigned his governorship as a mark of protest against Islamabad's actions in Balochistan.

A few days later, on 14 February, Attaullah Mengal, having recovered visited me and disclosed that the army had taken over Kalat district and had spread over Balochistan as far as the Chaman border. He now believed that Bizenjo's dismissal from the Balochistan governorship was imminent. Later we called on Pir of Pagaro. The Pir seemed wary of confronting the PPP government by political agitation. He was of the opinion that we should take up the issue in the National Assembly on constitutional grounds and should not resort to public demonstrations. But by now the events had rapidly moved past us. The following day, 15 February 1973. Bhutto dismissed the governors of NWFP and Balochistan. In the NWFP Arbab Sikander was replaced by Aslam Khattak and in Balochistan Bizenjo had been replaced by none other than my friend and brother-in-law, Sirdar Akbar Khan Bugti. In Balochistan Attaullah Mengal's ministry was dismissed and a thirty day state of Presidential Rule was imposed upon Balochistan. A day later the NAP-JUI government of the NWFP resigned in protest. Large contingents of the army poured into Balochistan. Within ten days a British newspaper reported that three divisions of the Army passed through Quetta and the soldiers have been spread out in the mountainous areas.³⁸⁷

On 10 February a cache of arms was found in the Iraqi Embassy at Islamabad. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was aware of the arrival of the crates of arms as soon as they had landed and provided Bhutto with photographic evidence. The likely destination of weapons was Iran where Iraq was keen to incite insurgencies. Iraq and Iran, as the subsequent bitter war between them would reveal, were engaged in a deadly feud over the Shat-al-Arab waterway. Neither government was above aiding dissidents in the other's country. The timing of the raid on the Iraqi embassy coincided with the PPP government's actions to destabilize the government of Balochistan. Taking a page out of history Bhutto decided to place the blame for the smuggled arms on the NAP leaders of Balochistan. It was eerily reminiscent of Hitler's plot of burning down the Reichstag and using it as an excuse to ban all forms of political opposition.³⁸⁸

While Bhutto may not have had a hand in the import of the arms he certainly made full use of the opportunity that their discovery provided him with. Without a shred of evidence the government instantly orchestrated a campaign accusing the Baloch NAP leaders of planning to arm insurgents in Balochistan with these weapons. By the very next day the government controlled Press went on the rampage. In one newspaper the editor sycophantically wrote:

we would be failing in our duty if we do not warn the Central Government that if it waivers to clean the country of foreign agents, their local hirelings (sic) and

³⁸⁷ *The Guardian*, 22 February 1973.

³⁸⁸ In February 1933 Hitler's storm troopers engineered a plot and burn down the German Parliament (Reichstag). Hitler placed the blame of the fire on his political opponents. Within a few weeks he had arrested most of the Opposition, dissolved parliament and had himself installed as supreme leader. Once Hitler had obtained all powers he banned all Opposition parties and enforced the ruling by means of concentration camps and systematic terror.

does not effectively check political parties and individuals in the pay of Moscow, it would be doing the greatest disservice to the people of Pakistan. In this task, though generous (sic) as it is, President Bhutto shall have the support of all patriotic elements.³⁸⁹

The editorial demanded that questions ought to be asked of the NAP leadership whom it openly insinuated to be parties to this 'sinister conspiracy'. Using Doctor Goebbels's concept of the 'big lie',³⁹⁰ the PPP government tarred the NAP provincial government with this accusation and then used it to arrange for its dismissal. In time Bhutto would further imitate Hitler by not only creating his own concentration camp at Dalai, but also setting up his own 'storm troopers' in the guise of the notorious Federal Security Forces (FSF).

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The arbitrary dismissal of the Balochistan government galvanized the Opposition into joining forces and forming an alliance which came to be known as the United Democratic Front (UDF). On 28 February 1973 a meeting was held at Islamabad which was attended by all the leaders of various Opposition groups, the only exception being Air Marshal Asghar Khan, who declined to attend.³⁹¹ It was decided at the meeting that a coalition of Opposition parties be formed which would unitedly demand the return of democratic norms of government. After lengthy discussions a number of items of issue were agreed upon and included in the UDF agenda. In general our demands were.

- (1) a judicial enquiry into the Iraqi embassy arms conspiracy;
- (2) lifting of the state of Emergency which had been in operation since 1971;
- (3) firm guarantee of fundamental rights and civil liberties;
- (4) release of all political prisoners;
- (5) ending of the persecution of the Press; and
- (6) withdrawal of the army from Balochistan.

Along with our outrage at the manner in which the Balochistan Government had been autocratically dismissed, we were also seriously perturbed by the way in which the PPP

³⁸⁹ *Daily News*, 12 February 1973. Wajid Shamsul Hassan was the editor that time.

³⁹⁰ The theory was that the more outrageous the lie and the more often repeated, the more it is successfully accepted as 'truth' by gullible masses.

³⁹¹ It was reported that Asghar Khan had refused to participate in the m because he did not recognize the representative character of the National Assembly and offered instead to send an observer. His offer was rejected.

government was riding callously roughshod over human rights and Press freedom. As a condition of the Opposition's acceptance of the interim constitution, we had asked for and received a commitment from the government that fundamental rights of the people would not be violated. It was also upon this assurance that we had agreed to constitutional concessions at the time of the 'Constitution Accord' in October 1972. And so, the UDF was formed with these most basic and fundamental issues at the core of its creation.

Soon a decision had to be taken as to who would lead the UDF. To my surprise a number of people felt that I, not being affiliated with any party, was the appropriate choice to head the united coalition. On the way to a meeting at Zahoor Ellahi's house, Wali Khan and Bizenjo mentioned to me that they had put up my name for the leadership, and had been supported in this move by JUI, JUP and the Jamaat-i-Islami. Though I was grateful to them for their faith in me, I was reluctant but could not tell them so in plain words. At the meeting Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi openly favored Pir Pagaro for the position. He stated that as Bhutto was a Sindhi, it was important for the Opposition to select a Sindhi to head the UDF. I gladly withdrew in favor of Pir Pagaro. With the benefit of hindsight I can say we might have erred that night. The Pir's fondness for activities such as horse racing far outweighed his penchant for politics. Soon he made it clear that he would be otherwise occupied on Saturdays and Sundays. On several occasions UDF meetings had to be postponed because he was unavailable. Even when present at meetings, the Pir would often lose interest and wish to adjourn for coffee and chocolates.

Another factor that did not help the UDF was the component of its membership. A number of small and relatively less known parties, such as Tehreek-e-Khaksar, Ahle Hadees and the Ahrar - all three of whom had been inducted into the UDF by Nasrullah Khan's maneuvering - insisted upon having an equal say in UDF affairs. While these parties had no representation in the National Assembly their votes were given the same weight as those of any major party, such as NAP, JUI, etc. By currying favor of these minor parties and enlisting their support, highly political individuals such as Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan would succeed in getting themselves foisted on the UDF leadership. It was sad to see petty power politics take place when much greater issues were confronting us on a national level. At times even some of the larger parties felt obliged to draw support from these insignificant parties simply to bolster their positions during votes on policy matters. These maneuverings did little to strengthen the objectives of the UDF and on occasion even detracted from them.

Bhutto's reaction to the formation of the UDF was bilious. On the eve of the formation of the UDF he issued a front page diatribe in the National Press Trust newspapers. All of us were cast as traitors. He began his attack by declaring NAP, JUI and Jamaat-i-Islami as opponents to the creation of Pakistan. He even lambasted the factions of Muslim League with the Opposition, whom he accused of being one-time members of

Iskander Mirza's Republican Party and opposed to the creation of Pakistan (quite overlooking the fact that he himself began his politics as a staunch Republican Party member). Among this heated rhetoric he even found time to single me out. I, who as a headstrong sixteen year old, had incurred the wrath of my local Deputy Commissioner and later the school authorities at Dehra Doon by my ardent waving of the green Star and Crescent banner, was now being cast as yet another traitor. The Morning News reported, 'The independent member from Dera Ghazi Khan, who is also attending the convention, was also opposed to the Pakistan Movement'.³⁹² Ironically, these accusations of disloyalty to Pakistan were emanating from a man who had himself opted to return to Pakistan as late as in November 1953,³⁹³ Truth was a commodity never highly valued by Bhutto.

In the meantime the Bhutto regime's policies of systematic terror continued unchecked. On 22 February Mian Tufail, the Amir of Jamaat-i-Islami was scandalously manhandled in jail. A week earlier a number of Opposition members had been arrested including Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi who was absurdly charged with taking part in a theft of two buffaloes, and would be arrested a couple of months later for a related offence. About the same time Altaf Gauhar was re-arrested. A few weeks later the newspaper *Jasarat* was banned for two months. On 23 March 1973 the government policy of repression struck a new peak, at UDF's first public meeting held at Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi.

On 22 March the Opposition had sought and received permission to hold the public meeting the next day. However, later that evening we received reports that Khar, the governor of Punjab, had sent a large number of people to disrupt the meeting. Camps had been set up in Rawalpindi to accommodate these government sanctioned hooligans. It was only later that we were to discover that a large number of these disrupters were members of the PPP's newly formed storm troopers, the FSF, who had been instructed to discard their uniforms and show up in plain clothes but with their weapons. The government had planned this covert action under the name of 'Operation Pastry'. Despite being forewarned of the threat of severe disorder we were resolutely determined to face them and proceed with our planned meeting.

Prior to the meeting Wali Khan, Bizenjo, Shaukat Hayat, and I met for lunch before proceeding to Manto's house where all the Opposition leaders were meant to assemble at 2 p.m. Pir Pagaro was the last to arrive and he appeared a bit distraught. We were told by him that Khar had contacted him over the telephone at his hotel. According to Khar, 'the public' was highly incensed and would disrupt the Opposition public meeting. Khar did not wish the Pir to be subjected to insults or humiliation and appealed to him not to attend.

³⁹² *Morning News*, 28 February 1973.

³⁹³ See, Chapter 5 for greater details.

Soon after the Opposition leaders arrived at Liaquat Bagh, as we were making our way to the stage, gunfire began. Undeterred we made our way on to the platform and stood there facing the pandemonium that had suddenly been unleashed. Gunfire and the sound of bullets whizzing could be clearly heard around us. People, in their hundreds, soon panicked and began to flee. A number of enraged NAP workers from the NWFP began charging the disrupters with sticks and shovels which they had brought with them having been forewarned about the disruption, but they were clearly ill-equipped to face automatic machine-guns. The meeting for all intents and purposes was over. In the ensuing chaos we made our way out. Only a couple of feet away from me a person was hit by bullets. I saw him writhing on the ground covered in blood.

The violence at Liaquat Bagh led to the death of eleven people and many were seriously injured. The next day a number of us, including Mian Tufail, Mufti Mahmood, Shaukat Hayat, Bizenjo and I, visited the injured in the hospitals. Most of them were NAP supporters from the NWFP. Wali Khan had already returned to Peshawar accompanying the bodies of his party workers. Later, the UDF was condemned by the government for allowing Wali Khan to bring in his NAP supporters from the NWFP into Punjab. To deflect from the government's direct role in the killings, efforts were made to give the event dangerous ethnic overtones. Official suggestions were made that the violence had been engendered by the residents of Rawalpindi who had resented the intrusion of the Pathans into their province with the avowed aim of creating trouble to humiliate the Punjabis. It was a credit to Wali Khan that he made it clear, when he visited the homes of the bereaved families to offer *fateha*, that the killings had nothing to do with Punjabis.

After the Liaquat Bagh incident the Opposition unanimously decided to boycott all proceedings of the National Assembly. This caused a dilemma for the government which was keen to have the constitutional deadlock resolved. Within days I, along with six other members of the UDF's Action Committee,³⁹⁴ was to receive an invitation from Bhutto for discussions on the constitution to be held on 2 April. These invitations led to much debate within the ranks of the Opposition. When we gathered on 1 April at Zahoor Ellahi's house in Islamabad to discuss the invitation's, wide differences immediately erupted among those present. There was a strong lobby advocating that the UDF reject the invitations. Surprisingly most of these advocates of noncooperation did not even belong to the UDF,³⁹⁵ Professor Ghafoor, Maulana Noorani and I, on the other hand, felt it was important that the UDF's viewpoint on the future constitution be put forward to the government. Initially even Wali Khan was quite reluctant on the issue of sending the UDF representatives to meet with Bhutto but the three of us managed to persuade him to send a NAP representative to the meeting. It was my strong belief at that time that the future constitution was not just the preserve of the

³⁹⁴ The others invited by Bhutto were Shaukat Hayat, Mufti Mahmood, Maulana Noorani, Professor Ghafoor and a NAP representative to be chosen by Wali Khan (who nominated Amirzada Khan).

³⁹⁵ They included Malik Qasim, Mahmood Ali Kasuri, Barrister M. Anwar Hassan Mahmood.

existing majority government but belonged to the present and coming generations of Pakistanis. And, as such, it was incumbent on us to temporarily set aside our grievances and animosity with the PPP, and try to ensure that the new constitution provided for a democratic system of governance.

On 2 April the six UDF Action Committee members met with Bhutto and his team.³⁹⁶ Bhutto appeared grim when we met him. It appeared to me that the Opposition's sharp campaign against him seemed to have met with some measure of success. The meeting lasted for over three hours. At an early stage the NAP representative, Amirzada Khan, voiced an objection to Rafi Raza's presence at the meeting, on the grounds that as Rafi Raza was not an elected representative he was not entitled to participate. Bhutto conceded this demand and asked Rafi Raza, who then held the position of special assistant to the president, to leave the room. While the meeting ended inconclusively, Bhutto made it obvious that he was quite desperate to see the UDF end its boycott of the National Assembly proceedings. He wanted the constitution to be in place as soon as possible. Passing the constitutional bill in parliament without the presence of the Opposition would have deprived the constitution of its legitimacy in the eyes of the public and the world at large.

On 4 April the UDF Action Committee held a meeting to discuss our position. Once again a number of non-UDF politicians insisted on joining and voicing their divisive views. Malik Qasim and Hassan Mahmood (both Convention Muslim Leaguers), and Mahmood Ali Kasuri (representing Tehrik-i-Istiqlal - a party which had refused to join the UDF) now insisted that all negotiations with the government be brought to an abrupt end. Fortunately better sense prevailed. Shortly afterward the Action Committee members went once more to the presidency to meet with Bhutto. At the meeting we were presented with an *aide-memoire* wherein Bhutto conceded to some of our demands which he had earlier rejected. Later, after the meeting, we were rather surprised to learn that a statement had been issued from the president's office that none of the UDF's demands would be accepted unless they attended the National Assembly session.

We had also begun to experience problems within the Opposition. One of the senior members of my group of independent MNAs, Maulana Zafar Ansafi, had earlier voiced open disapproval of some of the component parties of the UDF. His criticism of the Jamaat-i-Islami, JUI and the secular NAP had increased with time. He had threatened to attend the National Assembly in defiance of the UDF boycott. Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi and I tried our best to persuade him not to do so but he remained adamant. When he broke ranks and participated in the proceedings on 7 April, it reflected poorly on our image of solidarity. Later I was to learn that Ansari had met with both Khar and Bhutto. It was they who had managed to convince him that it was in his best interests to break with the Opposition at this crucial phase.

³⁹⁶ Bhutto's team consisted of Abdul Hafiz Pirzada, Sheikh Rasheed, Malik Akhtar and Abdul Qayum Khan.

Khar used all his powers of persuasion - both pleasant and unpleasant - to prevail upon a number of Opposition members in the Punjab to adopt a less belligerent attitude. In this task he was assisted by some senior Lahore newspapermen. At the same time Hafiz Pirzada was holding negotiations with Professor Ghafoor and making conciliatory gestures on Bhutto's behalf. It was becoming apparent even to the more bellicose members of the UDF that an understanding would have to be reached. On the basis of the *aide-memoire* a settlement was finally reached between the UDF and Bhutto. In return for meeting some of our demands the UDF now agreed to participate in the National Assembly proceedings.

On 10 April, the day the constitutional bill was passed in the Assembly I was in Karachi attending a bail hearing of Attaullah Mengal. The boycott of the National Assembly had brought about a new wave of repression throughout the country. In my home district all the cases that had been registered against my family and supporters during the Dera Ghazi Khan by-election had been revived once again. Khar's brother, Ghulam Miladi, had been touring the Rojhan area encouraging and inciting people to forcibly occupy the Mazari chiefs family agricultural property. A strong rumor was circulating of Asghar Khan's impending arrest. I was informed by journalists that one of his Tehrik-i-Istiqlal party men, Mushir Pesh Imam, fearing arrest, had already fled the country. In April, as the days went by, more and more people were arrested. One of the victims happened to be Ellahi Buksh Soomro, who was picked up by the police in his hometown of Shikarpur. I was in Sonmiani at that time which was not too far from Shikarpur. I went over to meet Ellahi Buksh's father Moula Buksh Soomro, an independent MNA, whom I had known over the years, to offer whatever support I could. Later, at the end of April, I attended Ellahi Buksh's court hearing at Karachi to provide moral support - which in those days was the most one could do given the political circumstances.

On 12 April I flew to Islamabad and joined my MNA colleagues in signing the constitution. To my knowledge there were only two abstainers, Makhdoom Noor Muhammad Hashimi and Mian Nizamuddin. Their objections were based on the fact that Bahawalpur had not been declared a separate province. Later that day, in a spirit of generosity, Wali Khan, Bizenjo and I went to the presidency to witness the ceremony of Bhutto affixing his presidential signature on the new constitution. That evening there was a special dinner given by the speaker of the Assembly to commemorate the signing of the constitution. Bhutto, who seemed quite delighted at the outcome, asked me to join him at his special table. He chatted with me pleasantly and thanked me for my support in breaking the deadlock. I told him I did what I believed was in the best interests of the country.

The importance of a permanent constitution could not have been underestimated. The memory of the events in East Pakistan were still uppermost in our minds. Despite our

deepest reservations about the state of PPP governance, national interest demanded that the Opposition participate in the constitution making process. The UDF had stuck to a number of democratic demands which under the terms of *aide-memoire* Bhutto had accepted. Concessions had been extracted from both sides. Ours were more permanent in nature, while Bhutto's would sadly prove to be more ephemeral.

* * *

Akbar Bugti, as the new governor of Balochistan was finding it excessively difficult to form a new majority government. Earlier, on 6 March 1973, I had met with him at Islamabad while he was on a visit to the capital. It was my first meeting with him since the dismissal of the NAP government and his appointment as governor. In March, Akbar appeared totally unrepentant and expressed complete confidence in his ability to run the province. He told me that he was convinced that I was being misled by Bizenjo. In his view both Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri had earlier fallen into the same trap. As far as he was concerned Bizenjo was an arch-intriguer who had deliberately created misunderstandings between him and his erstwhile companions.

By late April the situation in Balochistan had turned grave. Army action had begun in Marri and Mengal tribal areas! I was convinced that the use of the armed forces in the province was a fatal blunder, especially so after the bitter harvest reaped in East Pakistan. The army mind, as was proved in the Eastern Wing, was stodgy by nature and tended to view complex issues in simplest of terms. Led by General Tikka Khan, a sycophantic Bhutto loyalist, the army had now been unleashed in large numbers to pacify Balochistan by brute force.

Time and time again I raised the issue of Balochistan in the National Assembly. Within a fortnight after passing of the constitution, I asked the National Assembly to pass a resolution calling for an immediate halt to the army operation. I told the House:

It breaks one's heart to see our brave *jawans*, whose sworn duty is to protect our borders from enemy aggression, being used by the party in power to shoot down our own kith and kin, for after all, we are all Pakistanis. For God's sake, let us put a stop to this senseless killing, or there will be a wave of outrage, not only against the government in power, but, what will be more hurtful, against our brothers in uniform. I appeal to the honorable members of this august house to pass a resolution demanding an immediate stop to all atrocities being committed by the army.³⁹⁷

My appeal fell on deaf ears.

³⁹⁷ 30 April 1973.

In an effort to boost the morale of the people of Balochistan UDF decided to hold a public meeting at Quetta on 27 April. A few days before the scheduled meeting Bizenjo called on Bhutto and reminded him that NAP still retained a majority in the provincial parliament. He urged Bhutto to restrain the army and settle the issue by negotiations. Bhutto believed that he had the whip-hand and saw no reason to settle for anything less than total control of Balochistan.

I arrived in Quetta on 26 April and was received at the airport by Attaullah Mengal, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, Bizenjo and others. The provincial capital was emotionally taut with an air of heightened expectation. NAP banners were in evidence all over the city. As expected, there was an overwhelming presence of police everywhere. I learnt that a large number of NAP and UDF supporters had already been rounded up to prevent them from welcoming the arriving UDF leadership. Akbar Bugti, learning of my presence in Quetta, contacted me with an invitation to visit him at the Governor's House later that day. During lunch with my Baloch NAP friends, Bizenjo mentioned that he had learnt that Akbar Bugti was becoming increasingly disillusioned and disenchanted with Bhutto. He then suggested that it was perhaps time to try for a reconciliation. It was noticeable that the others present - Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri and Ahmed Nawaz Bugti - were not at all averse to the idea. I told them I would do my best to bring about a reconciliation.

That afternoon Akbar received me warmly at his formal residence which he insisted on using only while he was performing his official duties. Not only was his food still cooked in his own private home and brought across, but he also insisted on returning to Bugti House at night. It soon became apparent that he was not particularly happy with Bhutto and when I broached the possibility of a reconciliation with his former friends and colleagues, he seemed quite willing. He said that if Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri and Bizenjo came to him and offered their regrets for the behaviour meted out to him after the 1970 elections, he would not only let 'bygones be bygones' but would immediately swear in Attaullah Mengal as the chief minister of Balochistan. As governor he had the constitutional authority to do so and as far as Bhutto's expected 'tantrum' was concerned, Akbar told me, that he would deal with it himself. He told me in plain words, 'To hell with Bhutto. I couldn't care less about his views. Once I've restored Attaullah's government I'll resign and that will be that!' I told Akbar that I would convey his message to the NAP leaders but added that they might object to visiting him at the Governor's residence but I saw no difficulty in them visiting him at Bugti House. The vital issue of *syali* or tribal pride could not be completely overlooked. But Akbar was adamant that the venue would be his official residence or nothing.

When I spoke to the NAP leadership both Bizenjo and Ahmed Nawaz Bugti were agreeable to the idea, but as I had apprehended Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri expressed their willingness to go to Bugti House but rejected outright the notion of visiting the Governor's House. Bizenjo was not a tribal sirdar and as far as Ahmed

Nawaz was concerned, Akbar was after all his brother so the concept of *syali* did not arise. The same did not hold for either Attaullah Mengal or Khair Buksh Marri. As sirdars of their tribes they saw nothing demeaning in visiting a brother sirdar's house, but the idea of going to a governor's official residence was, not surprisingly, quite unpalatable to them. Thus on an issue of Baloch tribal pride, rather than politics, the chance of a valuable compromise was lost.

On the morning of 27 April at a gathering of the assembled UDF leaders, twelve out of the elected total of twenty Balochistan provincial assembly members assembled in our presence and signed a document declaring their avowed support for Attaullah Mengal as chief minister.³⁹⁸ Nothing further could have highlighted Bhutto's total travesty of democracy than the sight of the angry but powerless parliamentary majority gathered before us. The speeches made by the UDF leadership evoked a strong response from the large crowd that had gathered to hear them. Wali Khan severely criticized the Shah of Iran - who had called on the governments of India and Pakistan to help 'crush' the autonomous movements in Balochistan and the NWFP - for interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan. Noorani and Attaullah also spoke very forcefully. Not surprisingly Attaullah Mengal's address drew strong emotional sympathy from the public. When it was my turn to speak, as soon as I began loud firecrackers were let off. Thinking it was gunfire the crowd panicked and there was instant pandemonium. Not long afterwards I came to the conclusion that the disturbance had been timed specially for me. Akbar had not at all been pleased that I, a friend of his, had insisted on supporting and keeping the company of people he clearly perceived to be his rivals. He was in the habit of indulging in his own peculiar brand of black humor.

In the meanwhile army atrocities against Pakistani civilians continued to take place in Balochistan in the guise of 'patriotism'. People whose loyalties lay with their dismissed elected government and who were now bitterly opposed to the government in Islamabad were adjudged to be 'insurgents and traitors'. But the reality was not of course what it seemed. The army was not acting on behalf of the state but clearly once more as an arm of the central government. After years of subjecting the country to army rule, mediocre military minds such as that of General Tikka's, could no longer distinguish between defending the state and protecting the interests of the central government. Unfortunately, at this time, the only lesson the senior military officers seemed to have learnt from the debacle of East Pakistan was now to choose to dutifully obey the civilian martial law administrator - in other words, Bhutto - as opposed to previous incompetent militarists such as Yahya and Ayub. These military minds once

³⁹⁸ The twelve MPAs were: Sirdar Attaullah Mengal, Sirdar Khair Buk Marri. Gul Khan Naseer, Agha Abdul Karim, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, Abdur Rehman, Dost Muhammad, Narvabzada Sher Ali, Maulvi Saleh Muhammad, Maulvi Shamsuddin, and Miss Fazila Aliani. On 6 June these twelve signatories also sent a signed notice to the Governor requisitioning the Provincial Assembly to pass a motion of no-confidence against the chief minister, Jam Ghulam Qadir. Akbar Bugti chose to ignore the notice.

more divorced themselves from the realities of the day. The needless brutality applied on the Bengali citizens of Pakistan was now being replicated on the Baloch citizens of Pakistan. With the army acting as the instrument of a despotic government it was not surprising they found resistance. Pushed to the wall a simple Baloch tribesman, whose world view was then still fixed by centuries of tradition of loyalty only towards his own family and tribe, resists and takes up arms. The act of tribal resistance was soon being proffered as proof of 'treason'. Tragically, yet once again the vast majority of people of what until recently had been West Pakistan, remained completely apathetic to the miseries of yet another subjugated province.

* * *

The next few months proved to be politically quite hectic. There were numerous meetings of the UDF as we launched an aggressive drive against the government. In my home district government efforts to harass the Mazari family and its supporters continued unabated. On 16 May my brother Mir Balakh Sher contacted me and told me that Akbar Bugti had spoken to him and asked him to warn me that Bhutto and Khar were extremely angry at my behavior and had decided 'to sort me out'. A week later, on 23 May, Bizenjo and I chanced upon Hafiz Pirzada on a flight between Lahore and Islamabad. I told Pirzada to inform his leader that he should instruct Khar to desist from victimizing my poor and hapless supporters and instead Bhutto should aim his resentment directly at me. On the flight home to Karachi a few days later I found myself seated next to Abdul Qayum Khan; the interior minister. Much to my surprise Qayum Khan paid me a number of compliments and then proceeded to invite me to join the government. Adopting the role of an experienced politician - which he undoubtedly was - he ventured to advise me on the importance of government patronage. When I told him that I could do without the government's beneficence, he shook his head and retorted: 'You're a young man. When you grow older and mature you will then realize what politics is all about.'

At Karachi, on 29 May, I called on Pir Pagaro who informed me that he had received fairly authentic information that the government was planning to eliminate the NAP leadership as well as me. All I could do was to shrug my shoulders. The die had already been cast and I would now leave it to the will of God. In the meantime I was determined to do whatever I could do to achieve a free and liberal political environment.

On the night of 31 May the central UDF leadership departed Karachi on Khyber Mail for a nationwide trip. I had come to respect the character and courage of Wali Khan, who towered above most other leaders of the UDF. My feelings were reciprocated by the Pathan leader, as we perhaps realized we had much in common belonging as we did to tribal communities. We shared a coupe during the train journey. At Hyderabad a large crowd had gathered at the station to receive us but it was near midnight and too

late to address them. At dawn we met with a rousing reception at Rohri, followed by similar response in the towns of southern Punjab such as Sadiqabad and Rahimyar Khan. In the late morning of 1 June the Multan station was so crowded with UDF supporters that we had difficulty disembarking from our carriage. Even the newspapers reported that, 'the platform was jam packed. The people raised full-throated slogans as the train entered the station. Many people climbed to the top of the bogies to get a glimpse of the leaders'. The government responded the next day by sabotaging UDF's plans to hold a public meeting at Multan's Qasim Bagh. Many bus loads of PPP *goondas* were brought in from outlying areas such as Jhang, Mianwali and Dera Ghazi Khan and assembled at Qasim Bagh under police protection a few hours before the scheduled meeting. Not only did this hired mob successfully intimidate members of the public wishing to attend the meeting but they also went about dismantling the podium that had been prepared specially for the meeting. With our plans in sudden shambles the UDF was left with little choice but to call the whole thing off.

The following day, 2 June, we continued with our train journey to Lahore where we planned to address the public at Gol Bagh the next day. By the early hours of 3 June the Punjab police had taken complete possession of Gol Bagh and encircled it with barbed wire. As an added measure a mixture of police, FSF and hired *goondas* had been given the task of impeding any attempt made by the UDF leaders to approach the meeting ground. We managed to reach the Mall only to find that barriers had been erected across the road to prevent us from moving further. An enormous crowd of angry supporters blocked by the barriers appealed to us to cross the blockades and continue. Instead we took turns by making short emotionally charged speeches from the car roof. The police tried to prevent this impromptu meeting by resorting to *lathi* charges, and tear gas soon dispersed the crowd. Unhappily we were left with little choice but to abandon this meeting also.

A few days later I left for Islamabad by road. On 6 June I attended another meeting of the UDF. By now I was getting slightly disillusioned with this coalition of Opposition parties. Faced with a vengeful government it made sense for us - to sink our differences and unite as one, but to my mind it was proving to be an arduous task. It was not as if any of the major component parties of the UDF, such as NAP, JUP, JUI or Jamaat-i-Islami, were the cause of my dissatisfaction. Rather, my source of discontentment stemmed from the minor players who now wished to assert themselves on the centre stage of the Opposition movement. While the senior leaders of UDF such as Wali Khan, Professor Ghafoor and others played their roles in a largely altruistic manner, such was not the case with a number of other participants. Some of these participants did not even represent parties within the UDF and the majority of them had not even managed to get elected. These people often ignored the larger problem and instead thrived on petty politicking and manipulating situations to their advantage, Hassan Mahmood was trying to use his status as brother-in-law to Pir Pagaro to establish himself as a 'kingpin' of sorts. There were others such as Nawabzada Nasrullah, Malik Qasim,

Abdul Sattar Niazi, all with personal agendas of their own. Unfortunately even Zahoor Ellahi, who was suspected of using his financial clout with Pir Pagaro, tried to dominate each meeting by speaking as loudly as possible. In time I became aware that my associates in the NAP, Jamaat-i-Islami, JUP and JUI held views similar to my own, but for the sake of unity we determinedly slogged along.

In early June I received a message from Bhutto requesting me to meet with him to discuss the Balochistan issue. On 8 June I called on him at the presidency. During our discussions Bhutto made it clear that he was getting fed up with Akbar Bugti's bullheadedness and refusal to follow dictates. He gave the appearance of sounding me out for ideas to assist him in resolving the Balochistan dilemma. Bhutto informed me that Mengal tribesmen were cutting telephone wires and were now engaging in subversive activities. Soon he would have to ask the army to adopt sterner measures to deal with them. Then out of the blue he suggested that as 'we have been friends and the fact that you are on very close terms with the Baloch NAP leaders' perhaps I should consider 'shouldering the responsibility' of the Balochistan governorship. It appeared that the fact that only a few days earlier I had supposedly been on his 'hit' list never seemed to have entered his mind.

I found myself placed in an awkward position of refusing Bhutto's offer for the second time. While I felt given the state of affairs in Balochistan, my intervention might assist in resolving the dispute, at the same time I was certain that my acceptance of the governorship would be seen as betrayal by my colleagues in Balochistan. Instead I suggested that he seek a rapprochement with the Baloch leaders of NAP. Surprisingly Bhutto now revealed his growing state of despondency. He said, 'Who should I talk to?' He then pointed out that Attaullah Mengal openly used 'the filthiest of language' against him, adding that it was not just directed at him, 'but also on my office, as after all I am the President of Pakistan'. Then he criticized Khair Buksh Marri. The Marri sirdar, he said, 'is so arrogant that when I talk to him he turns his face away. I find his behavior intolerable'. Bhutto kept his worst venom for his last target. He began venting his spleen against his own appointed governor of Balochistan. In an emotional voice he lashed out at Akbar Bugti and called him 'an egomaniac' and 'a schizophrenic'. I noticed he made no mention of Ghaus Buksh Bizenjo.

Bhutto could hardly blame the Baloch leadership for opposing him. He had created the Balochistan tragedy by his own overwhelming egomania. I had little regret for refusing the governorship as holding high offices has never meant much to me, besides I placed immeasurable value on retaining the respect and trust of friends. I never let on to my NAP colleagues about the offer, but many years later I was to discover that Bhutto had already discussed my name as a possible governor with NAP and the Baloch leaders had happily given it their blessing, before he made the offer to me. Bhutto would never have considered telling me that the NAP was involved in the offer as he always wished to be seen as the ultimate dispenser of 'gifts'. If I had known I would have most

probably accepted his offer and maybe - and just maybe - the prolonged misery and suffering experienced in Balochistan might have been avoided. The only person I confided the full facts of my meeting with Bhutto was Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, whom I have always found to be a man possessed with distinct qualities of honesty, trust and decency.

The next day I called on Bizenjo and told him about Bhutto's views on Balochistan and his threat to deal harshly with recalcitrant Mengal tribesmen. Bizenjo appeared very despairing. He confided in me that he had been trying his utmost to bring about some sort of resolution to the political crisis in Balochistan. All his efforts, he said, had been rendered useless by the intractable attitude adopted by Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri. Bizenjo blamed it on what he referred to as their 'sirdari' mentality, which dictated that one could only negotiate from a position of strength. Negotiating from a position of weakness, Bizenjo maintained, was perceived by them to be an exercise in humiliation and had to be avoided at all costs, even when faced with a tragedy of immense proportions. Bhutto had continued to maintain contact with Bizenjo. As an accomplished politician Bizenjo always preferred negotiation to confrontation. He believed that 'a door' for a compromise should always be left open. Some years later his more functional approach to politics would alienate him from most of his unyielding colleagues, but that was to take place in the future.

* * *

Over the weeks and months members of the UDF had I vociferously berated the government at every opportunity for its policy in Balochistan. Finally, to pacify the Opposition the government finally allowed a resolution to be passed in the National Assembly calling for a 'Fact Finding Mission' to be sent to the province. The nine-member team consisted of Minister of Law, Hafiz Pirzada, as leader, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo, Professor Ghafoor, myself and five stalwarts of the ruling party.³⁹⁹ The team was given the responsibility of visiting Balochistan and reporting its findings to the National Assembly within a two-week period. On 15 June we were flown to Quetta on an air force C130 and put up at Lourdes Hotel.

Later that day we were flown to Sibi and from there we were taken by helicopter to Maiwand in the Marri area. As we were disembarking from the helicopter we were met with an organized crowd of about ten youngsters, all of whom were shouting slogans. I had anticipated 'Bhutto *zindabad* but '14th Punjab Regiment *zindabad*'⁴⁰⁰ came as a bit of a surprise. If the plight of the locals now under strict military control had not been so pitiable I might well have been amused. The reception at Maiwand had been well organized. As Hafiz Pirzada alighted from the helicopter the provincial Public Relations

³⁹⁹ The five PPP MNAs were Hanif Khan (deputy speaker), Choudhry Muhammad Asiam, Choudhry Jehangir Ali, Chaudhry Abdul Wahid an Niamatullah Shinwari.

⁴⁰⁰ It could have been 12th Punjab Regiment, my memory is unclear.

Officer promptly tied a turban on his head. Ironically, the PRO, as well as the turban, had flown with us all the way from Quetta especially for the occasion. The officially nominated spokesman a young school teacher, had also been well drilled. At someone's prompting he pointed at Bizenjo and myself and asked the delegation 'Why have you brought these anti-Pakistan traitors with you?' Infuriated with this impudence both Bizenjo and I walked out of the gathering. We only returned after he apologized to us on Pirzada's instructions.

The PPP government had given much publicity to its development and aid work in the Marri area. Prior to our delegation's arrival food and cloth had been distributed among the people of Maiwand. The army had forcibly encircled all routes leading to the Marri area and blockaded all supplies from entering. There had been a chronic shortage of food and basic essentials as a consequence of this action. I noticed that all the tribal people, who had been forced down from the hills by near starvation, were in tattered clothes. Despite the hasty provision of cloth prior to our arrival, no clothing could be stitched due to the absence of sewing machines. After talking to some of the local people I discovered that the much-publicized road building exercise in the area was a sham. Under the Mengal ministry repair work had already commenced on the dilapidated roads built originally by the British and then neglected for a quarter of a century. With the sudden influx of the army the workers had fled. Now the army had taken up the task under a barrage of official publicity.

On our return to Quetta that evening I received a telephone call from Akbar inviting me over for tea, followed by dinner with Bhutto, who was staying with him as his guest. I was greeted by both of them and taken to the terrace overlooking the garden, where We sat down on chairs laid out for us. Bhutto proceeded to ask me about our trip to Maiwand. I candidly expressed my dissatisfaction at the manner in which our visit had been organized. Bhutto nodded sympathetically and said he would look into it. His attitude was one of extreme friendliness. He enquired about my family in a manner common among friends. While we were talking we could hear the din of children playing on the lawn in front of us. It was Akbar's son Sallal, still only a child, playing with a group of children. Irritated by the noise Bhutto turned around to Akbar and said 'Isn't that a lot of noise?' To Bhutto's surprise Akbar snapped back, 'He is a child and having a good time. Why should I stop him? If you are allergic to noise let's go inside and sit in the drawing room'. Then in a defiant mood, Akbar who was sitting between us, lifted his feet up and casually placed them on the coffee table in front of Bhutto and disdainfully lit a large Havana cigar. Bhutto in his role as head of state was no longer accustomed to people taking such liberties in decorum, but he was wary of Akbar and quietly backed off. The rest of the evening progressed more pleasantly. Bhutto was once more as friendly, charming and affable as he had ever been with me. At dinner we were served at our own table, away from Bhutto's accompanying ministers and other VIPs. The PPP leader could not, at times, resist letting his juniors know where they stood with

him. Later as a movie was being shown, we were joined by Hafiz Pirzada, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Rafi Raza.

On 17 June at a meeting held in my room, Attaullah Mengal and six leading members of the Balochistan provincial assembly joined us.⁴⁰¹ In front of the parliamentary delegation these MPAs presented a document signed by twelve MPAs demanding the end of presidential rule and the restoration of the provincial assembly. In the document these MPAs had also expressed their full confidence in Attaullah Mengal's leadership. It is worth noting that these twelve MPA signatories represented 60 percent of the total provincial assembly membership of twenty MPAs. The MPAs told the delegates that the army had imposed a food blockade in the outlying areas of the province, with particular severity in the Jhalawan and Marri territories. People living in these areas were facing a dire shortage of basic foods such as grain and sugar - as well as kerosene and medical supplies. That evening we were invited to the Governor's House for an address by Akbar Bugti. As we entered the residence I noticed General Tikka Khan sitting on the terrace. Akbar gave us a very confident explanation of the provincial situation. He used charts and diagrams with great flourish - even I was impressed with the style of his delivery, though not necessarily with its content. He asked me to stay back for an informal chat, which I did. He was less formal and more friendly than at our meeting the previous night. It seemed that our relationship was slowly reverting to normal - despite our serious divergence of views.

The next scheduled visit for the delegation was Jhalawan on 21 June, so the delegation was flown to Karachi. While I was at Karachi my brother Mir Balakh Sher dropped in to see me. He informed me that he had a meeting with Bhutto who was once again enraged by me. According to my brother Bhutto had just received a report from his intelligence services that I had referred to him as 'a dictator far worse than either Ayub or Yahya'. I could not recall having made such a statement, but now it seemed Bhutto was determined to get even with me and had instructed Khar to arrest my sons to teach me a lesson. As my younger eighteen year-old son Sher Ali was in Quetta with his maternal uncle Akbar, it was probable that the first target was to be my eldest son Sherazam, then nineteen years of age. It occurred to me that it was in the very nature of the man to turn on his full charm on one day and pure venom on the next. I warned Sherazam to take care and also contacted Sher Ali by telephone and asked him to take precautions. After speaking to Sher Ali I also spoke to his uncle, Akbar Bugti, and informed him of my outrage at Bhutto's behavior.

On 21 June I once more took part in the parliamentary delegation's tour of Balochistan, From Karachi we left for Wadh, the capital of the Mengal tribe, by helicopter. On the way we stopped over at Las Bela where we were met by a pre-arranged crowd of PPP

⁴⁰¹ The other MPAs were Khair Buksh Marri, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti. Agha Abdul Karim, Maulvi Saleh Muhammad Shah, Dost Muhammad and Abdul Rehman (the latter three were from JUI).

supporters, all of whom were chanting slogans such as 'Bhutto *zindabad*', 'Bizenjo *murdabad*,' etc. When the helicopter took off for Wadh, the pilot announced that it was 'too dusty' to land there and immediately headed back to Karachi. Neither Bizenjo nor I were convinced by the pilot's assertion. To our minds the government was determined not to allow us to visit Wadh. Not only would it have been impossible for the government to arrange for willing PPP supporters to meet us at Wadh, but we had expected the reception there to be extremely hostile towards the PPP MNAs in the delegation. The Mengal area had also been recently subjected to a cold-blooded army blockade and regular harassment. The people there were also suffering from a dire shortage of food and other necessary supplies. Confirming our view, a newspaper report later stated that the PPP members of the delegation had made it plain to the authorities that 'they were not ready to risk their lives' by visiting the Mengal area.⁴⁰²

On our return to Karachi Professor Ghafoor and I had a lengthy meeting with Hafiz Pirzada and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the army from Balochistan. Hafiz assured us that he had already spoken with his leader and that Bhutto was now keen to negotiate a settlement on an urgent basis. We, in return, suggested that we would arrange for Bizenjo to be given the authority to discuss the matter directly with Bhutto on behalf of the Opposition. We also agreed to temporarily call off the Balochistan fact-finding mission and allow the discussions to be held. But we made it clear to Pirzada that in the event the two sides failed to reach a settlement, then the parliamentary tour would have to be recommenced and a final report on Balochistan would have to be handed over to the National Assembly, all according to the terms of our earlier agreement.

Bhutto's sudden change of heart on the Balochistan crisis had been clearly caused by his growing frustration with the failure of his Balochistan policy. The inability of Akbar Bugti to cobble together a majority government in the province was a glaring reminder of Bhutto's lack of success. On top of this failure, major rifts had appeared within the ranks of the government supporters. Governor Bugti's political faction called the Baloch Warna had openly clashed with Doda Khan Zarakzai's Muslim League (Qayum group). At Quetta Airport as a crowd had gathered to welcome Bhutto in Balochistan the Baloch Warna had attacked Nabi Buksh Zehri's car and chanted anti-Qayum League slogans. During Bhutto's tour of Balochistan in the middle of June, despite a massive official effort to 'organize' Bhutto's public meetings in the province, expressions of public hostility were hard to suppress. At Naal Bhutto was received with a host of black flags and anti-government slogans. At Khuzdar pistol shots were fired while Bhutto was speaking. To make matters worse, during this period two major clashes had also taken place between the army and Baloch tribesmen at Baran Lak and Jhal Jao in which the federal forces had suffered large losses in terms of lives and equipment.

⁴⁰² *Frontier Guardian*, 30 June 1973, p. 2.

With the opportunity of new negotiations on Balochistan the extent of the government's hostility towards me suddenly dropped. On my return to Islamabad the next day, out of the blue I learnt from my brother that he had just been asked to meet the president's military secretary to be questioned for allegedly 'misreporting' the details of his conversation with Bhutto to me. At moments such as these I, not surprisingly, wondered if Bhutto had a single honest bone in his body.

By 24 June Bizenjo had begun his meeting with Bhutto. Bizenjo kept in close touch with me and on 27 June I happily noted in my diary 'met Ghousi who seems very hopeful with his talks with the president'. With the arrival of the NAP leaders to Islamabad on 28 June to meet with Bhutto the chances of a settlement were looking good.⁴⁰³ I met them in Islamabad before they left to meet with the president at Murree. Later they all joined me at Nathiagali for discussions at 'The Retreat', a rest-house, where I had been staying. There was a cloud of disappointment over dinner. Bhutto had promised a return to majority rule in Balochistan but only after 14 August 1973 - a date over a month and a half away. Until then, on Bhutto's insistence, the status quo was to be maintained. Most of the NAP leaders expressed little faith in Bhutto's assurances. Attaullah, who had the least confidence in Bhutto, referred to him as 'a liar' who would renege on his commitment at the very first opportunity. The next evening I met Bhutto, along with other parliamentary leaders, at an official meeting at Murree to discuss national affairs and the recognition of Bangladesh. After the meeting he invited me in for a private session with him. I took this opportunity to impress upon him the urgent need for a satisfactory settlement in Balochistan. He assured me that he was willing to do his best. At the same time he conveyed his regret at my refusal to accompany him on his state visit to the USA⁴⁰⁴ and reassured me of his friendship and good wishes, insisting that my brother Mir Balakh Sher had 'misrepresented' what he had told him during their meeting. On 1 July, I was again invited by Bhutto to meet him at his rest house in Murree. He was once more full of charm and geniality. I tried to convince him to make at least one positive gesture towards Balochistan before he departed for USA. I told him that it was essential that a semblance of trust be resurrected between him and the NAP leadership but he became quite evasive and to my disappointment began to prevaricate each time I attempted to raise the issue. All he was doing, as it later turned out, was to procrastinate events until the new constitution took effect on 14 August 1973.

⁴⁰³ The NAP leaders consisted of Wali Khan, Arbab Sikandar, Attaulla Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri and Bizenjo (who was already present at Islamabad).

⁴⁰⁴ I had been invited by Bhutto to accompany him on his state visit to US. Later I was to discover that it was in fact the US State Department that had asked Bhutto to bring me with him as a representative of the Opposition. Between the Moscow-supporting NAP and the right-wing religious parties my more moderate position probably made me more appealing to the US. I declined Bhutto's invitation because of his intransigence on the Balochistan issue.

The idea of maintaining status quo in Balochistan could hardly have appealed to the NAP leaders. For a full five months the NAP-JUI Opposition parties had waited patiently for a provincial assembly meeting to take place. In return all they got was intimidatory attempts to break their unity. Bhutto was desperately trying through the services of Akbar Bugti to convert his super-imposed minority government of Jam Ghulam Qadir of Las Bela into a 'majority' one. At the same time no one could ignore the presence of over sixty thousand troops actively engaged in the province. The army's callous strategy of depriving Pakistani tribesmen and their families of food supplies was hardly the way to win them over. A large number of the hardier men sent their women, old folk and children to settled areas to find food and shelter while they themselves stubbornly took to the hills with their rifles and shotguns. By mid-July Attaullah Mengal, without bothering to mince his words, boldly stated the obvious at a press conference held at Karachi at which Professor Ghafoor and I were present. The *Dawn* reported:

Mr. Mengal told a questioner forthrightly that the fight for democracy in Baluchistan had now been shifted from the floor of the House to the 'mountains of the interior'... He said that both the Federal and the Provincial Governments have, through consistent pressure tactics, intimidatory methods and repressive measures, pushed the people of Baluchistan 'to the wall' and forced them to struggle for their very existence.⁴⁰⁵

At the end of July the UDF held a convention at Lahore. During its second session on 30 July a heated debate took place over the decision to launch a nation-wide civil disobedience. The Jamaat-i-Islami unfortunately proved to be hesitant on the issue, but to our good fortune on a point of disagreement the Ahrar party decided to leave the UDF once and for all. Later another meeting was held in Mufti Mahmood's room. At this meeting Wali Khan was officially elected as the leader of the Opposition, Maulana Noorani as the secretary-general and I was assigned the task of chief whip for the Opposition in the National Assembly. It was finally agreed that the civil disobedience movement would be launched on 24 August.

On 7 August an event took place at Mali, a village in Balochistan, which would soon become part of Baloch folklore. I came to know about it the very next day through Attaullah Mengal. The tragic incident was later vividly described by a foreign author:

Seeking to avenge an ambush in which [the army] had suffered heavy casualties, an army unit stormed into the village of Mali. The soldiers set up an improvised fortress in one corner of the village and then began to ransack huts one by one in search of concealed weapons. Men and women alike were roughly lined up in the village square. Shoorouts occurred with those who resisted. Some of the

⁴⁰⁵ *Dawn*, Karachi, 18 July 1973.

older villagers were beginning to surrender when seventy-two-year old Mir Luang Khan, elder brother of the Baluch poet and political leader Gul Khan Nasir, hobbled out of his hut on crutches to the center of the square. Shouting that he would die before permitting the troops to violate Baluch honor by intruding on the female members of his family, he picked up his outmoded muzzleloader and started to fire at the soldiers in their fortified huts. Soon most of the able-bodied men in the village had joined him in hand-to-hand fighting that lasted for four hours. Army sources concede that reinforcements had to be called in before the village could be subdued but deny Baluch eyewitness accounts claiming that fourteen soldiers were killed before Luang Khan was shot in the head while hiding with his followers in the village mosque. The Baluch bitterly acknowledge that thirty-five Mali villagers were killed by [army] machine gun and artillery fire, many of them women and children...⁴⁰⁶

Only four days later, on 11 August, I was informed that Ali Muhammad Mengal, the leader of the Jhalawan anti-Ayub guerrilla movement of the 1960s, was killed by the troops of the Pakistan armed forces.

The years of bitterness, misery and rage among the tribes in Balochistan had begun. A year later the events in the Marri area of Chamalang valley in September 1974 would eventually eclipse all that had preceded it. As always, it was the poor ordinary tribesmen who would suffer immensely. They followed an age-old instinct. When faced with the threat of an overwhelming marauding force - whether it be the Mughals, the Sikhs, the British or the Pakistan army - this instinct called for a retreat to the steep redoubts from where they could rally to defend themselves. Islamabad and the army called them 'insurgents', 'rebels' and 'traitors', but to these simple tribesmen all that they were doing was protecting their homes, families, and honoring their concept of loyalty to their tribe and their sirdar. And, in the meantime the Pakistan army was once more busily engaged in killing its own civilians - its senior generals had learnt nothing from their disastrous attempt to subjugate the Bengalis of Pakistan. However, this time the numbers were on their side. In reality there were only a few thousand poorly armed Baloch tribesmen facing the full might of a modern and well-equipped army servilely following the wishes of an overambitious Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

While parts of Balochistan were reeling under a ferocious armed onslaught in Islamabad it was politics as usual. On 10 August the feeble Choudhry Fazal Ellahi was nominated as the future president.⁴⁰⁷ Two days later Bhutto was nominated as prime minister, winning 109 votes in the House, against Maulana Noorani's 28 votes. Much to our disgust three JUI MNAs - Hazarvi, Abdul Hakim and Abdul Haq - deserted the Opposition benches and supported Bhutto. Later in the afternoon a number of us met in

⁴⁰⁶ Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow*, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

⁴⁰⁷ Fazal Ellahi received 139 votes in the National Assembly. His rival, Opposition candidate, Amirzada Khan, got 45 votes.

Mufti Mahmood's room and decided to boycott the planned swearing-in ceremonies for the president and prime minister due on 14 August unless our demands were fulfilled. Aware that Bhutto was not going to concede to any of our demands I returned to Karachi where on 14 August I watched the swearing-in ceremonies on television. Bhutto's speech, as I noted in my diary, 'seemed, as usual, so reasonable'. According to him, it was the Opposition which was to be blamed for its unreasonable obstinacy in coming to terms with his majority government. During his speech he hinted that his patience was running out.

The results of Bhutto's impatience became apparent the following day. On 15 August a wave of arrests took place. Among the detained was the senior hierarchy of the Balochistan NAP leadership - the triumvirate of Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo. More arrests were expected. Soon I received a call from Quetta informing me that the provincial government had also issued arrest warrants for Ahmed Nawaz Bugti and me.⁴⁰⁸ I did the only thing I could do in such circumstances. I packed a small bag containing essential toiletries and a spare set of clothes and carried on with my usual activities. That afternoon I received a telephone call from Ahmed Nawaz who told me that, like me, he was waiting to be arrested.

The following day I issued a blistering attack on Bhutto and his government for arresting the Baloch leadership. Even though the NAP arrests was the major news story throughout the country, my statement managed to make an appearance in only two newspapers - *Hurriyat* and *Jasarat*.⁴⁰⁹ Unhappily, most of the other newspapers were, by now, too cowed down to risk the wrath of Bhutto. On 18 August Ahmed Nawaz Bugti arrived in Karachi and the following day we both left for Lahore to attend a meeting of the UDF action committee. At the time serious flooding had taken place in Lahore and other parts of Punjab, including my home district of Dera Ghazi Khan. On 20 August after visiting a number of the flood effected parts of Lahore, we held a meeting in which it was decided to proceed with the civil disobedience movement. At one stage not everyone had agreed to participate in the movement. The Jamaat-i-Islami, who wished instead to take part in organizing flood relief work, were angrily condemned by Maulana Noorani who accused them of cowardice and betrayal of our common cause. A number of people were assigned the task of leading the protest movement in the various provinces. Wali Khan, Arbab Sikandar and Mufti Mahmood were nominated to lead the campaign in the NWFP, Nasrullah Khan and Zahoor Ellahi in the Punjab, Ghafoor Ahmed and Noorani in Sindh and Karachi, and I was assigned the leadership of the movement in Balochistan.

On 22 August, after much trouble and inconvenience Ahmed Nawaz and I managed to board a PIA flight leaving Lahore for Quetta. Instructions had been issued to prevent us

⁴⁰⁸ A number of newspapers published similar reports about my impending arrest on 17 August 1973.

⁴⁰⁹ Published in these two newspapers on 17 August 1973.

from reaching Quetta. The authorities at Quetta were already on the alert. We were recognized on arrival and a large police contingent riding on a number of trucks, followed us from the airport. I stopped off at Attaullah Mengal's house where I had planned to stay, while Ahmed Nawaz continued onwards to his brother-in-law, Mir Hasan Bugti's house. Soon after my arrival at Mengal House I received a telephone call from the provincial home secretary asking me to present myself at his office. Controlling my temper I did all but tell him 'to get lost'. I informed him that if he wished to detain me, then he'd better send the police with a lawful warrant of arrest to Mengal House. Later I was to learn that at this stage Akbar Bugti stepped in. According to the report I received, Akbar had decided that as I was a 'guest' in his province, it would be contrary to Baloch tradition to have me arrested. To my mind, I had come with an assigned task of leading a civil disobedience campaign against a federal government represented in the province by my friend Akbar, and was no one's 'guest'.

Akbar seemed convinced that I would not be very effective in Quetta in the absence of Ahmed Nawaz. Unbeknown to me, he had his brother arrested that very night. The police picked Ahmed Nawaz from his brother-in-law's place and took him to the airport, where he was made to wait an hour, for his nephew Salim's arrival. He was then placed in Salim's custody and flown by helicopter to Dera Bugti. At the Bugti tribal headquarters he was confined in his brother's house. His solitary room was guarded around the clock by a team of Bugti tribesmen loyal to his brother.

Early in the morning of 23 August, when I learnt about Ahmed Nawaz's arrest, I held a press conference condemning it and, rather than let it dampen my spirits, immediately involved myself in organizing the protest movement. At a gathering of Balochistan's UDF members, the next day, I was disappointed to learn that most of them were not very keen to join a protest movement and instead wished to seek a settlement with the government. I rallied the NAP and JUI members - who to my mind were the only effective political force in the province and after much persuasion, they reluctantly agreed to abide by any instructions received from UDF's central action committee.

On 25 August, in defiance of the government's imposition of Section 144,⁴¹⁰ I led a good crowd of UDF supporters to Quetta's Mazaan Chowk. Despite hesitation on part of a large number of UDF members and efforts by the police to discourage participation, it proved to be a good start to our campaign. In the meantime Agha Karim - who had been delegated the task of convincing Akbar Bugti to desist from using violence to suppress the movement - returned with the information that Akbar was furious with me. The next day I read out a copy of the UDF resolution - which I had just received - authorizing me to lead the protest movement in Balochistan. After the meeting I led another procession to Mazaan Chowk. On this occasion I was accompanied by all the leading members of both NAP and JUI who remained at liberty, even the local amir of

⁴¹⁰ Restricting the assembly of more than four people in a public place force of law.

Jamaat-i-Islami joined in. These protests soon became a daily feature much to the annoyance of the local government.

On one occasion even the ladies joined in a first-ever women's march in the history of Balochistan. The ladies were led by Jennifer Musa MNA and widow of Kazi Musa, who was accompanied by the wife and daughters of Khair Buksh Marri, the daughters of Gul Khan Naseer and Colonel Sultan Muhammad Mengal. Even the Mazari family was represented by my cousin Saif-ur-Rehman Khan's wife, who happened to be a half-sister of the Marri sirdar.

These valiant ladies marched up to the official Governor's House to hand a petition to Akbar Bugti, requesting him in honour of the people of Balochistan to resign his office forthwith. Probably aware of the ladies' demands Akbar had the gates of the building closed and refused point-blank to meet with any of them.

In the meantime Akbar audaciously denied ever having arrested his brother. A statement issued at the Governor's House, attempting to refute the damning evidence of Ahmed Nawaz's detention stated:

This is totally false. As a matter of fact Mr Ahmed Nawaz Bugti is in his hometown for the dual purpose of looking after his property and his health which has recently deteriorated to some extent. If anyone is solicitous about his welfare he can communicate with him or visit him in his hometown.⁴¹¹

The following day a member of Akbar's own family informed me that Ahmed Nawaz had briefly managed to flee custody and escape on horseback. He was later caught and tied with ropes before being placed back in the confinement of the solitary room.

The week of daily protest processions had become rather grueling for me. On 26 August I caught the flu and despite a temperature that remained extremely high, persisted with the protests. On every occasion at reaching Mazaan Chowk fiery speeches would be given against Bhutto and Akbar, and, on the odd occasion, against the ineffectual chief minister, Ghulam Qadir of Las Bela. There was much fury among the NAP supporters who were convinced that Akbar Bugti had betrayed the Baloch cause that he had himself for so long espoused. They took every opportunity to publicly condemn him for it. Sitting in the Governor's House and receiving daily intelligence reports, Akbar was hardly pleased with the criticism publicly being heaped upon him, and with my leading role in it. On 31 August he addressed a press conference attacking me for interfering in Balochistan affairs.

⁴¹¹ *Dawn*, 31 August 1973.

The public demonstrations culminated in a large public meeting on the last day of August. This meeting was also attended by other leaders of the UDF, including Wali Khan and Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, who had flown in to Quetta for the day. The next day I left for Karachi, along with Wali Khan and Ghafoor Ahmed, to file a writ of *habeas corpus* on Ahmed Nawaz's behalf. The following day at a meeting held at my house at Karachi we decided to boycott both the National Assembly and the Senate until the political situation improved. A number of those present - notably Wali Khan and Professor Ghafoor - expressed their disappointment with the head of the UDF, Pir Pagaro. It was felt that he was not taking sufficient interest in our protest movement.

On 4 September I was able to file the writ of *habeas corpus* in the High Court calling for Ahmed Nawaz Bugti to be produced. The next day I received a telephone call from Mir Hasan Bugti - Ahmed Nawaz's brother-in-law - telling me that Ahmed Nawaz has been on a hunger strike in Dera Bugti for a number of days. Later one of my drivers, who had just returned from Sonmiani, told me in a state of agitation that truckloads of armed police had been marauding my home area arresting and terrorizing the locals. I felt quite helpless as there was nothing I could do to protect my people from Bhutto's and Khar's intimidation. These harassments further strengthened my resolve and made me more determined to continue with what I was doing.

On 8th September as I was attending the High Court pursuing my writ for Ahmed Nawaz, I came across Dr. Abdul Hai, the NAP MNA from Balochistan, being escorted in handcuffs by the police. It deeply upset me to see him in such a condition. He informed me that he had applied to the High Court to be transferred to an 'A' class to which he was entitled as an elected MNA. I learnt that at the time of his arrest he had not been allowed to bring anything with him apart from the clothes that he was wearing. I made a list of things that he needed and later had them sent to him. Over the following days I made sure to attend his application which was being heard before Justices Abdul Qadir Sheikh and Khuda Buksh Marri. While the police were ordered to remove the handcuffs, they were reluctant to take the personal risk of upgrading him to an 'A' class cell and accordingly, dismissed his application.

On 9 September Ahmed Nawaz was finally released from his incarceration at Dera Bugti. He arrived by train at Karachi the very next day. Ahmed Nawaz had lost a great deal of weight as a result of his hunger strike and appeared physically quite weak. Later in the afternoon he held a press conference at my house giving a detailed description of the imprisonment he had suffered in a private jail at the hands of his own brother. It appeared that my High Court writ combined with his hunger strike had forced his sudden and unexpected release. Akbar's rejoinder was not late in coming. His son Salim issued a ludicrously absurd press statement that both Ahmed Nawaz and I had wished to avoid participating in the Balochistan civil disobedient movement. According to Salim's mendacious tale, while Akbar had acquiesced to his brother's request that 'a helicopter...be arranged...to take him to Dera Bugti', he had turned down my request 'to

be sent to Rojhan'.⁴¹² The statement was so puerile and ridiculous that I did not deem it worthy of a reply.

By mid-September Bhutto had once more adopted a conciliatory guise. Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh were flown to Rawalpindi and were placed with Ghous Buksh Bizenjo in the Sihala rest-house, which had been declared a sub-jail. Emissaries⁴¹³ were sent to meet with them by both Bhutto and Akbar Bugti who had been called by the prime minister to Islamabad for special discussions on 13 September. The Balochistan Governor publicly expressed his optimism that 'some understanding would be reached with the NAP leaders to the satisfaction of all concerned'.⁴¹⁴ But the Baloch leaders proved more rigid. Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, who had also visited the three men at the Sihala rest-house, told me on the telephone that the three NAP leaders had flatly refused to hold any talks with Bhutto until and unless he implemented the agreement reached between them at Murree on 28 June 1973, i.e., Bhutto's promise of a return to majority rule in Balochistan after 14 August 1973. In the meantime, the jailed triumvirate had stated, if the government was in the mood for discussions then the UDF was always available to them.

On 17 September a meeting of the UDF action committee, of which I was an executive member, was held at Lahore. I was not invited and only came to learn about it after reading a newspaper report. Angered by this tactless gesture I considered resigning from the UDF. I held an urgent meeting with other members of the independent group to discuss my intentions but they all advised me against it. A few days later I was informed that the UDF had decided to withdraw from the protest movement on Pir Pagaro's instructions. I now understood why my absence from the meeting was deemed to be necessary.

Despite the government's attempt at downplaying the armed struggle taking place in Balochistan the situation had not improved. I received reports of many encounters between the army and armed Baloch tribesmen. Taking advantage of the rugged terrain the tribesmen had become adept at ambushing unsuspecting soldiers. In one such incident, which took place on 27 August, a band of Marris attacked an army picket near Kohlu and killed a large number of soldiers and carried away their stored ammunition. Even the army later admitted to losing twenty of its soldiers, but the actual figure was suspected to be much higher. Such incidents were becoming increasingly common. Greatly outnumbered, the tribesmen had been forced to adopt guerrilla tactics of sudden attacks and quick disappearances. Over a period of four months the army had begun to suffer a large number of fatalities.

⁴¹² *Dawn*, 13 September 1973.

⁴¹³ Bhutto's emissary was Fazila Aliani, while Akbar Bugti sent his own supporter Amin Khosa.

⁴¹⁴ *Star*, 14 September 1973.

Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, who was the acting leader of the Balochistan provincial Opposition was still trying to find a way out of the crisis. On 30 October he informed me that he had phoned Bhutto in the hope of meeting with him, but Bhutto had refused, insisting that he would only meet with Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri. These two jailed leaders still obdurately refused to meet Bhutto until he honored the pledge made to them. When finally Bhutto did agree to meet with Ahmed Nawaz, it seems all he did was to criticize Akbar Bugti.⁴¹⁵ I later learnt from Ahmed Nawaz that, during the meeting, Bhutto had also expressed his unhappiness with me. Bhutto, as it turned out, was not as much upset with me for my anti-government activity, as he was by my voting for Noorani, instead of him, during the prime ministerial elections held in the House in August. Bhutto said that as he still considered me to be a friend, I had let him down badly by voting for a 'beard' instead of him. By October 1973 open differences had arisen between Balochistan's Governor and Chief Minister over the induction of Abdus Samad Achakzai as a provincial Cabinet minister. Achakzai was desperately keen to join the Cabinet and had been stirring up trouble in the provincial assembly to blackmail the government into acceding to his demand. At the same time, Akbar Bugti was becoming increasingly unhappy with Bhutto. He regarded the NAP problem as an internal Baloch one. Akbar adamantly believed that all negotiations between the government and NAP were his personal responsibility and would brook no interference from Islamabad in the matter. Bhutto clearly disagreed with this view, much to Akbar's annoyance. In November Akbar gave an angry speech at the army's Staff College at Quetta, in which he severely berated the federal government for purposely creating divisions between Baloch tribes. The federal authorities ordered that the press conference be 'blackened out'. The next day there was no mention of the governor's conference in any newspaper in the country. That day Akbar learnt the limitations of his power, but it was all too late. Bhutto now wanted the Constitution to be applied in Balochistan. This meant that all executive power would now be vested in the chief minister. Faced with a powerless symbolic role Akbar Bugti submitted his resignation to Bhutto on 31 October which he described as simply a letter from 'a friend to a friend and not from a Governor to a Prime Minister',⁴¹⁶ Bhutto accepted the resignation on 11 November, but asked Akbar to carry on as Governor until a suitable replacement could be found. Akbar now wished to become the chief minister, but now that he had achieved all that had been expected of him, Bhutto no longer required his services.

A creature of habit, Bhutto could not resist taking advantage of the changed scenario by settling his personal scores with his governor. In an interview he gave to a European television station he publicly spoke of Akbar Bugti in particularly harsh terms: 'The present Governor is suffering from schizophrenia. He's frightened now because he betrayed his old friends, 'Politics is a game of chess', said the Prime Minister, 'and Mr Bugti played his chess badly'.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Ahmed Nawaz had phoned me with this information on 11 November 1973.

⁴¹⁶ Dawn, 12 November 1973.

⁴¹⁷ The television interview was quoted in: The Christian Science Monitor 14 December 1973.

CHAPTER 7

Bhutto at the Height of his Power

In his speeches Khan Abdul Wali Khan once referred to the PPP leader as Adolf Bhutto. While at that time Wali Khan's reference to the Nazi leader might have appeared ludicrous to many, subsequent disclosures would suggest that this allusion was not so wide of the mark after all. In his memoirs, Rafi Raza, who was a close confidante of Bhutto, reveals that: '[Bhutto] had a penchant for comparisons with Hitler: he would urge Kausar Niazi as Information Minister to outdo Joseph Goebbels, Mumtaz Bhutto in Sindh to be Heinrich Himmler, and [Rafi Raza] as Production Minister to be another Albert Speer.'⁴¹⁸

Rafi Raza was a member of a committee that was set up in January 1975 to ensure that the members of the Federal Security Force (FSF) were given 'scientific and correct motivation' According to Raza, one of the other committee members - either Yusuf Buch or Kamal Azfar - proposed that all the FSF troopers be made to take a personal oath of loyalty to Bhutto on the lines of the Nazi SS. When Rafi Raza disallowed this proposal he admits to having earned Bhutto's displeasure.⁴¹⁹

Bhutto's fixation with Hitler was manifest by a similarity in coincidences. Apart from using the arms discovered at the Iraqi Embassy against the Baloch leaders, without any shred of evidence, in the manner reminiscent of Hitler's Reichstag fire, there were numerous more subtle examples. Aping Hitler, Bhutto chose to use a policy of systemic terror to brutalize his opponents. The concentration camp at Dalai and the FSF 'storm troopers' were clearly creations of Bhutto's Hitler-fixated mind. But his aspirations to match the Nazi leader finally came apart when it came to dealing with his generals.

The Nazi Fuhrer and the PPP Chairman had one thing in common: they were both completely amoral when it came to misusing their power. Bhutto adopted his own brand of terror to achieve his ends. In time he had managed to silence the Press and cow down a large number of his opponents. Edmund Burke, the eighteenth century political theorist, once said: 'It is necessary for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph.' In the Opposition we were beginning to realize that the sheer dread of Bhutto was causing a large number of people to avoid confrontation altogether. It is worth recalling some of the happenings which led to the creation of this climate of fear.

⁴¹⁸ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan 1967-1977*. op. cit., p. 3

⁴¹⁹ Rafi Raza, *ibid.*, p. 308 and footnote no. 54, p. 315.

By 1974 four political activists were victims of political assassination during the twenty-nine month period between June 1972 and November 1974. The fifth, was a botched attempt at killing a man Bhutto had grown to hate: Dr. Nazir Ahmed, Jarnaat-i-Islami, MNA - shot dead at his clinic at Dera Ghazi Khan on 8 June 1972; Khawaja Muhammad Rafiq, leader of Ittehad Party - shot dead by a sniper during an anti-government demonstration in Lahore on 20 December 1972; Abdus Samad Achakzai, leader of the NAP Pakhtoonkhwa of Balochistan killed in his house in Quetta by a grenade attack on 2 December 1973; Maulvi Shamsuddin, JUI MPA and Deputy Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly - shot in his car on his way to Fort Sandeman on 13 March 1974; Muhammad Ahmed Kasuri, father of Ahmed Raza - killed mistakenly, during a bungled attempt to assassinate his son, who was present in the car along with him, in Lahore on 10 November 1974.

Others were killed as well. On 28 September a serious attempt was made on Wali Khan's life as he was driving to Swat. Both his driver and guard were killed but Wali Khan luckily emerged unscathed. This incident had little effect on the NAP party president. He remained undaunted and continued steadfastly with his role as Leader of the Opposition.

On 5 October 1973 Ali Buksh Junejo - a former *Khalifa* of Pir Pagaro, who had joined the PPP, was murdered in Sanghar in broad daylight. The next day six supporters of Pir Pagaro, who were attending a court hearing against them, were taken from prison by the police to a deserted location and murdered in coldblood. The man given the job of taking Pir Pagaro's men to task was a former Pagaro loyalist, Jam Sadiq AH. Jam Sadiq was given complete administrative charge of Sanghar district.⁴²⁰ A few weeks later I was informed by a Sindhi politician that the Pir 'had become really scared and feared that he and his eldest son would soon be murdered by the PPP'.⁴²¹ Unfortunately the Pir was not the only one, a number of Opposition politicians had begun crossing over to the PPP in fear of their lives. However, while the Pir continued to officially head the UDF, his heart was no longer in the job. In the absence of any direction, bit players assumed a role beyond their political support or position and the unity within the UDF began to unravel.

Apart from the killings, during this period, thousands of people were detained from all over the country. As I have already mentioned, in just my home district of Dera Ghazi Khan alone - over a hundred and fifty people - members of my family, staff and supporters - were detained on fictitious charges. Most people were later released on bail on my writ in the High Court, but others did not get off so leniently. There were those like Kaswar Gardezi, Secretary-General of the NAP, who were sadistically tortured by the police while in detention. In a voice breaking with emotion Gardezi later related his

⁴²⁰ Jam Sadiq Ali exercised control in Sanghar independently of Mumtaz Bhutto, then chief minister of Sindh.

⁴²¹ This news was given to me by Haji Mowla Baksh Soomro, on 20 November 1973.

horrifying experience to me. The police presented him with an egg, a potato and an onion, he said, and then asked which of these would he prefer to be inserted into his anus. After undergoing this humiliating and barbaric ordeal, he was then threatened with sodomy - but to his good fortune this threat was never carried out.⁴²² Instead, he was badly beaten with a stout cane, after which he was forced to lie naked on a solid slab of ice. Gardezi was one of many to suffer such vicious brutality on the instructions of higher authority.

Apart from oppressing political opponents the regime had continued with its violent campaign against the Press. During this period the government generally used two methods to control the independent news media - by arresting their staff and placing a two-month ban on the newspaper. On some occasions these bans were made permanent by forcibly shutting down the newspaper.⁴²³ There were times when violent methods would also be used, such as when a gang of masked men ransacked the offices of *Jang* in Quetta in February 1972. On occasion the violence would be directly targeted at individuals. Such was the case when in September 1972 Khwaja Mana Rahman, of the *Dawn* Group, was shot at the Karachi Boat Club by hired assassins who made their escape. Khwaja Rahman survived luckily, but the police did little to apprehend the criminals.⁴²⁴ A few months later an attempt was made to shoot at Mana Rahman's daughter while she was driving her car.⁴²⁵ Given the circumstances I was disappointed, but not surprised, when, in September 1973, Mana Rahman called on me to tell me that both he and his brother-in-law, Mahmood Haroon, had sought and received forgiveness from Bhutto. Mana said to me that they had done so because they had 'lacked the courage to continue to oppose him'.⁴²⁶ The people who stood firm against Bhutto's autocracy were getting smaller in number and in time would shrink even further.

⁴²² Many other people were not quite as fortunate. I was reliably informed two politicians who were brutally sodomized by the police while in custody. One was a senior member of a religious party, the other one was a Muslim League Leader, who later joined the PPP. This depraved crime which was conceived at the highest of levels, was intended to humiliate the individual and break his spirit.

⁴²³ These included *Jasarat* (1973), *Outlook* (1974) and *Urdu Digest* (1975).

⁴²⁴ Many years later a case was registered against three people; Mumtaz Bhutto, who had been Chief Minister of Sindh at the time of the attack, Khanzada A. Waheed, a Karachi businessman (and maternal uncle of Farooq Leghari, later President of Pakistan) and Malik Ghulam Sarwar, one-time labour leader in the Karachi Shipyard. Even the former provincial Home Secretary of Sindh, Muhammad Khan Junejo would later state, 'Mr. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto had one Khanzada as a constant companion who was feared by all and I was all the time afraid of him as I believed that he was a goonda kept for terrorizing anybody who opposed the wishes of Mr. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, I believe Mr. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto was responsible for throwing some explosives in the house of A. K. Brohi and for firing on Mr. Mana Rahman of Dawn through Mr. Khanzada'. The Government White Paper on Performance of the Bhutto Regime, Volume II, 1979.

⁴²⁵ The incident took place on 26 April 1973, the assailants fired at her from a taxi which then disappeared in the traffic. The police, as usual, were unable to track them down.

⁴²⁶ Bhutto would appoint Mahmood Harooni as the first Pakistani Ambassador to Bangladesh.

By now the majority of the Press had been reduced to being mere mouth pieces of the government. Bhutto used the controlled Press to portray himself as an exceptionally capable democrat, whose patience was being unreasonably tested by the questionable aims of a discredited Opposition. The forthright journalist Zamir Niazi mentions in his book that the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), which was owned by the federal government, would issue regular instructions to the newspapers on what they could and could not publish. Describing the situation as it was then, he adds that:

On instructions from 'above' the APP 'orders' them to 'kill' certain items or delete some sentences or paragraphs from certain stones, particularly the speeches of the opposition leaders. The agency had the audacity to ask the newspapers during the Bhutto [regime] even to delete certain portions of speeches made on the floor of the National Assembly...⁴²⁷

Zamir Niazi also provides information on how the Press was used to create misinformation about the Opposition leaders. Many Pakistanis, mostly in the central Punjab, had begun to vilify Wali Khan as a traitor to Pakistan. Much had been said about the 'Pakhtoonistan' issue and allusions were continually made about NAP's ambitions to carve up Pakistan into smaller nation states. All that NAP had demanded was greater provincial autonomy and when Wali Khan took the opportunity at a public meeting, on 19 October 1973, to candidly erase the misapprehension, this is what took place:

APP received a Press advice that the whole speech had to be blacked out. Instead, they were told, a small paragraph would go out stating that Wali Khan in his speech had said that the people of the NWFP would shift the border check-post from Torkham to Attock bridge and would be able to enjoy fruits grown in Afghanistan.⁴²⁸

Ten days later on 30 October another fabrication was inserted into a newspaper quoting Wali Khan as having said: 'a new country comprising NWFP, Balochistan and Afghanistan would come into existence and the border line at Torkham would not be shifted to Attock bridge but would be located at the Margalla Hills of Islamabad'.⁴²⁹ Bhutto knew the power of the printed Press and used it to destroy the image of his opponents in the eyes of the gullible public. Wali Khan was to carry this 'mark of treason' for many years to follow, until sections of the Press, supporting the government of the day, decided to exonerate him.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ Zamir Niazi, *Press in Chains*, published by Karachi Press Club, 1986. p. 128.

⁴²⁸ Zamir Niazi, *ibid.*, p. 127.

⁴²⁹ *Mashriq*, Peshawar, 30 October 1973.

⁴³⁰ The very same Wali Khan, twenty years later, would be welcomed political partner by a prime minister from central Punjab and be hailed him as a Pakistani patriot.

Bhutto had also ensured that the government party remained within his tight grip. Anyone who strayed even slightly from Bhutto's narrow and suspicious standard of loyalty was summarily dealt with. One of his ministers later admitted Bhutto's notion of loyalty 'flowed only one-way, towards him and not from him'.⁴³¹ If any one of his subordinates threatened Bhutto's inherent insecurities by showing even a modicum of independence he would be swiftly punished. In December 1973 he dismissed Mumtaz Bhutto as chief minister of Sindh and replaced him with Mumtaz's rival, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi.⁴³² Then it was the turn of his own protégé, Khar - who had established himself so firmly in Punjab that his own sycophants were referring to him as *Sher-i-Punjab*. In March 1973 Khar was sacked as chief minister.⁴³³ Bhutto's obsession with maintaining an aura of invincibility was so strong that he would spare no one, not even those who had done him valuable and devoted service over the years. Nothing could ever justify the savage brutality that was meted out to his senior Federal Minister, J. A. Rahim, the man about whom, in 1968, Bhutto had himself told me was his 'mentor and guru'.

On the evening of 2 July 1974 Rahim was invited, along with the senior hierarchy of the PPP, to a dinner at the Prime Minister's House. The invitation was for 8 p.m. but the host, Bhutto, had failed to show up. By midnight the seventy-plus year - old Rahim lost his patience. He announced to some of the other guests that Bhutto was insulting his guests and behaving as if the country was his personal royal dominion - *Rajwara*, in Rahim's own words. He added that he could no longer wait for the 'Raja of Larkhana' and was heading home. When Bhutto finally put in an appearance he was informed by Hafiz Pirzada of Rahim's outburst.

In the early hours of the morning as Rahim lay sleeping he was woken up by a servant who informed him that there was a posse of men at his front door demanding to be let in. Rahim went to his front door to discover that it was Saied Ahmed Khan, the Chief of the Prime Minister's Security, who told him that he had come to deliver a personal message from the Prime Minister. When he opened the door the message was delivered by brute force. Saied Ahmed Khan leading a large group of armed and uniformed FSF troopers charged into Rahim's house. Bhutto's Security Chief began by pummeling Rahim's face and body with his fists until Rahim fell to the ground. Then Saied Ahmed allowed one of his men to hit the elderly man with his rifle butt while he lay prostrate. Rahim's son, Sikander, who rushed in to intervene, was soon beaten unconscious by the FSF troopers. Having delivered Bhutto's message, they then dragged Rahim by his feet and flung him into a jeep, along with his son. and took them to a police station. Rafi

⁴³¹ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

⁴³² Sometime after Mumtaz Bhutto's sacking, Jam Sadiq Ali, with the Minister's blessing, had the homes of Mumtaz Bhutto's brother and sister raided by the police.

⁴³³ With the implementation of the Constitution, which devolved executive powers on the chief minister, Khar had earlier vacated his post as governor and become the chief minister, replacing Meraj Khalid.

Raza arrived at the police station a couple of hours later and rescued him.⁴³⁴ More punishment for Bhutto's one-time 'mentor and guru' was yet to come.⁴³⁵

J. A. Rahim's punishment sent a clear message to all members of the PPP hierarchy that they were not exempt from the ruthlessness of Bhutto's wrath. Even Bhutto's close associates and cabinet ministers now lived in dread and fear of the unpredictability of their master's temper.⁴³⁶

Insecure, as he was by nature, he preferred the company of those who cringed before him and flattered his ego. As Kausar Niazi, his Minister for Information, later wrote: '[Bhutto] liked those people who constantly tried to prove themselves "more Christian" than Christ himself! As such those were the ones who were his favorites.'⁴³⁷ His ministers were well aware that Bhutto could not brook any form of criticism. Rafi Raza reveals that Dr. Mubashir Hassan told him that when he wished to speak to the Prime Minister he would do so only privately 'in order to avoid ugly consequences'. Raza also mentions that Bhutto forbade him to speak openly at Cabinet meetings to prevent others from becoming 'too independent and "contrary"'.⁴³⁸

Bhutto was, by now, confident of the army's submissiveness. After getting rid of General Gul Hassan, the army had been placed in the hands of General Tikka Khan, who, when he later became the Minister of Defence, was described by his Cabinet colleague, Kausar Niazi, as a man who 'considered licking the shoes of Mr. Bhutto to be the straight path to salvation'.⁴³⁹ Later when Tikka Khan was due for retirement Bhutto would choose another 'worthy' general to replace him, a man who had also displayed all the necessary signs of complete obsequiousness General Ziaul Haq.

In the beginning of 1974 - having browbeaten a large part of the Opposition, turned the Press largely into his own mouthpiece, terrified his PPP subordinates into total submission and the army placed under a submissive Tikka Khan - Bhutto was in near total command of all that he surveyed. All that opposed him was a disintegrating coalition of opposition parties in the UDF. At the time of the Islamic Summit in

⁴³⁴ From J. A. Rahim's press statement issued on 9 August 1977 (published verbatim in The Government White Paper on Performance of the Bhutto Regime, Volume in, 1979).

⁴³⁵ On 2 May 1976 J. A. Rahim and his son once more underwent a horrifying ordeal; Rahim was blindfolded and taken from his Karachi house to an unknown destination where he was punched in the kidneys, repeatedly throttled until he reached the point of unconsciousness and even burnt by cigarettes. His poor son, was brutally sodomized. From the press statement and the accompanying published evidence, it is clear that this action taken against Rahim was masterminded by Jam Sadiq Ali on instruction from Z. A. Bhutto. From J. A. Rahim's Press Statement issued on 9 August 1977 (published verbatim in The Government White Paper on Performance of the Bhutto Regime, Volume in, 1979).

⁴³⁶ And yet, he never retaliated in such a manner against people who expressed their scorn towards him-such as the Baloch sirdars. It is possible like most tyrants he only feared those who were not afraid of him.

⁴³⁷ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, Jang Publishers, Lahore, 1991, p. 51.

⁴³⁸ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

⁴³⁹ Kausar Niazi, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

February 1974 Bhutto was at the very height of his power. At the conclusion of the Islamic Summit, according to Kausar Niazi, Bhutto planned to dissolve the Assemblies and hold elections. But later, on the advice of his 'team of intellectuals' - upon whom Niazi pours much scorn - he changed his mind.

Mr. Bhutto had succeeded in getting the occupied territories of Pakistan vacated. The process of repatriation of the POW's had also begun. These were very pleasant moments. The nation had shed off its sense of shame, fear, hopelessness and despondence. All this had taken a period of two years to materialize. Undoubtedly the Islamic Summit was the climax, for it helped the defeated nation to see the entire Islamic world standing shoulder to shoulder with it. Had the elections been held at that moment the People's Party would have got the mandate to rule the new Pakistan. It would also have been able to avoid the pitfalls which later led to its humiliation and defeat of its government.⁴⁴⁰

If Bhutto had really been the political genius his supporters proclaimed him to be, he would have called for early elections. Instead he chose to rely on the advice of a 'team of intellectuals' of his own appointment. When he later opted for elections in 1977 he resorted to widespread rigging to obtain a win. To paraphrase Bhutto himself, he had 'played his chess badly'.

* * *

On 3 November 1973 I attended the boxing tournament at Karachi Grammar School. As a keen boxer during my school days, I used to enjoy this annual event at my sons' school. That evening I came across a new phenomenon. A large number of people at the school function - other parents and local dignitaries - whom I had known over the years avoided meeting or being seen near me. Apparently my opposition to Bhutto both within the Assembly and in the public domain had rendered me a social outcast to some. That day I made a rather acerbic entry in my diary, 'I notice how scared people are to talk to me - shows what our people are made of. Fear had begun to pervade among large sections of the society. While nothing was ever mentioned in the newspapers, stories about the vindictiveness of Bhutto's rule had been spread by word of mouth. In Karachi, Mumtaz Bhutto's roughneck antics as chief minister were also, by now, an open secret. People had become scared.

Earlier that day I had met Shah Ahmed Noorani and found him extremely depressed. The Opposition had been dealing with Bhutto for two years now and faced with the harshness of the regime's rule, Noorani saw little light emerging in the darkness of our tunnel. The feeling of gloom and depression was not just affecting Noorani, it was becoming quite pervasive. There were other vexations as well. I was becoming

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

increasingly disenchanted with the manner in which UDF was being run. Even overlooking Pir Pagaro's preoccupation with horse racing on Saturdays and Sundays and his general lack of commitment to the UDF, what was most annoying was having to deal with the petty personal ambitions of politicians at the sacrifice of vital national issues. On 5 November I had a meeting with a number of MNAs from my independent group in which we resolved to leave the UDF at the first reasonable opportunity. Some days later, I received a delegation from the Jamaat-i-Islami - Professor Ghafoor and Munnawar Hussain - with the mission of persuading us to stay with the UDF. Professor Ghafoor, who was himself critical of the trivial politicking taking place within the UDF, felt that, for the moment, unity of the Opposition against Bhutto was more important. I reluctantly gave in to his wishes but insisted that we would reconsider our position once again in the future. At the very next UDF meeting I made my feelings abundantly clear. In my diary I wrote 'I took a firm stand and told them off for lack of leadership and inspiration'. I also warned the assembled leaders that the manner in which some of the UDF members had been conducting themselves was incompatible with our original purpose. I am sure I annoyed a number of people present that day, but most of the more prominent leaders and their parties later let me know that they supported my stance.

In early November I received a telephone call informing me that two more charges had been filed against me in Dera Ghazi Khan for making inflammatory speeches against the government. Ten days later, while I was in Lahore, Mahmood Ali Kasuri and Latif Khosa, both acting as my legal counsels, presented a writ petition to Chief Justice Sirdar Muhammad Iqbal of the Lahore High Court. Four days later I was granted anticipatory bail by the Chief Justice.

On 26 November after a three and a half month absence the Opposition attended the winter session of the National Assembly. The day was marked by two events: my friend Pir Safiuddin of Makhad's desertion from the Council Muslim League to join the PPP benches and Opposition fears that Zahoor Ellahi, who had been imprisoned in Balochistan, was about to be murdered.⁴⁴¹ When Hafiz Pirzada announced that the Government of Balochistan was responsible for the safety of Zahoor Ellahi, I was given an opening to denounce the minority Balochistan government as a facade and remind the House about the fate of another MNA, the murdered Dr. Nazir.

I was determined that whenever an opportunity arose in the Assembly I would attack the government on the Balochistan issue, As the government had persisted in claiming that the confinement of the jailed Baloch leaders related to a 'criminal' matter, I got another chance to put them on the defensive when Mehmood Azam Faruqi made an

⁴⁴¹ Zahoor Ellahi had been arrested in Punjab on 12 November 1973 and was then taken to Balochistan, where he was detained on a charge of aiding rebel Marri tribesmen. He was later convinced that there had been a plan to murder him and that only Governor Akbar Bugti's intervention had saved his life. He was released two months later in January 1974 when the Supreme Court ordered his release.

adjournment motion asking about recent meetings between the government and the jailed Baloch leaders. I asked the House that if Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo were indeed criminals, then why had Bhutto recently sent Jatoi to Sihala to negotiate with them. The Law Minister, Hafiz Pirzada, responded by announcing untruthfully to the Assembly that Jatoi had never been sent to meet with the Baloch leaders. I then challenged him by asking the Speaker to be given the opportunity to meet with the jailed men so as to get documentary evidence proving the Law Minister to be a liar. There was prolonged period of hushed silence in the House which was only broken by the Speaker disallowing the motion.

The Balochistan issue remained in the forefront of my consciousness. I was deeply concerned at the plight of ordinary tribesmen and their families, who for no fault of their own, were being tyrannized by a politically imposed army of occupation. My democratic convictions could not also tolerate the imprisonment of my friends who had only recently led an elected majority government in the province. Bhutto being aware of my concern, would often attempt to allay them, for reasons known only to him. On 21 December he made a speech in the National Assembly in which he decided to once more refer to me as his 'personal friend'. The next evening at a dinner held by the Speaker for all the MNAs Bhutto insisted that I join him at his table. During the meal, he was full of charm and friendship and assured me that the Balochistan issue would soon be solved. In return he asked me to adopt a less hostile approach for the time being. The very next evening we once more met at a dinner hosted by Pir Safiuddin of Makhad. The entry in my diary sums it up: 'Bhutto calls me and is very charming as usual - says he will settle Balochistan issue within 4 or 5 days. Wants to see me in Larkana.'⁴⁴²

Bhutto, having detained the Baloch leaders, now believed that he had gained the upper hand in his dispute with them. He was only interested in resolving the dispute on his own terms, convinced, as he was, that those ruling in the provinces be subservient to his will. Bhutto had not counted on the dogged determination of Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri. These two insisted that three conditions would have to be met before they would consider entering upon negotiations with the central government: release of all political prisoners, the withdrawal of the army from Balochistan and restoration of majority provincial governments as per the Murree Accord. Bhutto, the ever hopeful politician, believed that he could somehow make them soften their stand and sent a number of his emissaries, including Fazila Aliani and Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi - later, even Ahmed Nawaz Bugti was deputed for this task - but Mengal and Marri remained implacable in their defiance.

Among the Baloch a sense of disillusionment had begun to seep in. Towards the end of December at Karachi, a delegation from the Baloch Students' Organization (BSO) came to call on me. They were deeply frustrated by the lack of progress on the Balochistan

⁴⁴² Diary entry of 23 December 1973.

issue and began accusing Wali Khan and NAP's Pathan leadership of not doing enough for their cause. They said they wished to break away from NAP. I urged them to exercise restraint and reminded them that unity was all important. On the first day of 1974 I was invited by the BSO to address a student gathering at Dow Medical College. I made an impassioned speech about the injustice done to the people of Balochistan but as I noted in my diary 'I did not say anything bitter or controversial as Bhutto had asked me not to, but I had to refute his charges against the Baloch leaders'.⁴⁴³ But Bhutto's promise of settling the Balochistan issue 'in 4 or 5 days' soon expired. The only change that took place during this period was that Akbar Bugti who had resigned had been replaced as Governor by the Khan of Kalat.

A few days later, on 12 January, when I learnt that the Pakistan Air Force had been engaged in bombing and strafing tribal people around the Bhambhore hills in the Marri area, I was back on the political war - path. I was deeply angered by the savagery of the response. On reaching Islamabad I pressed for a parliamentary debate on Balochistan and lobbied other MNAs, including Professor Ghafoor and Shaukat Hayat to push for it.

The debate on Balochistan was scheduled for 14 February and I spent a number of days preparing my opening address on Balochistan in the National Assembly. Yet when the appointed time came I was so charged with emotion and anger that I pushed "my notes aside. Instead I made a passionate extempore speech of which the only record I have is from a newspaper report the following day.

Mr. Sherbaz Mazari (Ind-D. G. Khan) was the first speaker from the Opposition. He began on an angry [note] and regretted that for eight months the reports of the delegation members had not been considered while people in Baluchistan, he alleged, were suffering.

The situation in Baluchistan, he said, could not be ignored for too long.

He said the NAP-JUI government in Baluchistan was dismissed illegally and unethically and in spite of sending [the] Baluch leaders to jail, the federal government had not been able to form a majority government there. Members of the Baluchistan Assembly had shown courage 'which many of us lack'.

Mr. Mazari said the 'so-called intelligentsia' of the country was indifferent while the people in Baluchistan were 'actually starving' and being suppressed by army and militia.

⁴⁴³ Diary entry of 1 January 1974.

Speaking as the main spokesman, Mr Mazari said that people were being shot like dogs in Baluchistan, the Army had blockaded sizeable populations, persons of [all] ages were starving. [The] Pakistan Air Force had been used to strafe people. Iranian ammunition was being used against the locals and that 'thousands' of political workers had been jailed. He demanded that the NAP Government in Baluchistan be reinstated.

While appealing to the House and the government to give the matter a cool thought, as a solution would be in the best interests of the country, he said it would be a good gesture if the government released all political prisoners before the forthcoming Islamic Summit conference in Lahore.⁴⁴⁴

That night I was to receive a call from Bhutto. He told me that it was 'his genuine wish to settle this matter'⁴⁴⁵ but he just needed a little more time. I listened to him but by now I had little faith left in his words.

At the time overthrow of the NAP government in February 1973, six NAP-JUI members of the provincial Assembly had been detained,⁴⁴⁶ the other eight members of the NAP-JUI coalition had been left at liberty. Among them, the first MPAs to desert their party was Fazila Aliani and Muhammad Khan Barozai, the former Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly. The by-elections held following the murders of Abdus Samad Achakzai and Mauvi Shamsuddin provided a further opportunity for the central government to increase its MPAs. By now, as was the case in the rest of Pakistan, by-elections had become a contemptuous parody of democracy.

With Khair Buksh Marri opting for his provincial seat, his MNA seat from the Marri-Bugti area of Sibi district had become vacant and a by-election was scheduled for 18 February 1974. The former Governor Akbar Bugti put up his son Salim for the seat and to his chagrin found his son being opposed by a PPP candidate, Taj Muhammad Jamali. Now it was Akbar's turn to face his former colleagues in the government. A few days before the election a grenade was thrown near Akbar's house. Two days before the date of the by-election, on 16 February, a PPP procession in Quetta was attacked by Bugti's supporters and as a result one was killed and two wounded. The PPP campaign in the election area was supervised by none other than the dutiful army chief, Tikka Khan, himself.⁴⁴⁷ I learnt subsequently, that on election day all the polling booths in Dera Bugti and Sui were surrounded by armoured cars and sandbagged machinegun posts.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Pakistan Times*, 15 February 1974.

⁴⁴⁵ Diary entry of 14 February 1974.

⁴⁴⁶ The six were Sirdar Attaullah Mengal, Sirdar Khair Buksh Marri, G Khan Naseer, Sher Ali Khan Nowsherwani, Dost Muhammad and Agh Abdul Karim. Another NAP MPA Abdur Rehman, had gone into prolonged hiding to avoid detention.

⁴⁴⁷ Ahmed Nawaz Bugti described the by-election events to me in person when he arrived at Karachi on 20 February - only two days after the election.

The settled areas of the adjacent Marri territory were already in the firm grip of army occupation. The likelihood of anyone winning against the government's armed might was unthinkable and not surprisingly, Taj Jamali won easily.

After the defection of Fazila Aliani, Muhammad Khan Barozai and others, the killing of Maulvi Shamsuddin in March depleted the Opposition ranks even further. In the 1970 elections JUI had won three seats to the Balochistan Provincial Assembly. By early 1974 two of the three JUI MPAs deserted their party's stance and had become ministers in Jam Ghulam Qadir's coalition government. Only the young thirty-two-year old Maulvi Shamsuddin had stuck to his guns. Despite a spell of imprisonment and later offers of high offices, Shamsuddin had refused to compromise his conscience. On 13 March 1974, the staunchly committed JUI MPA paid with his life for his principles.

During the by-elections held for the seats belonging to the assassinated Abdus Samad Achakzai and Maulvi Shamsuddin, the government ensured, through blatantly overt means, that their candidates got elected. By the summer of 1974 the PPPQayum League coalition had the support of nine Provincial Assembly members out of the fifteen who were at liberty. While the manner in which this had been achieved was totally deplorable, the minority government was finally able to get a vote of confidence in the reduced Assembly. In the backdrop of this political activity, the army action was moving forward relentlessly.

* * *

On 10 March Khar was removed as Chief Minister of Punjab and in my diary I commemorated this event by writing 'good riddance to a tin pot tyrant'. It was rare to come across a person of such moral and ethical decrepitude. During his reign in Punjab new and appalling standards of torture and terror had been set by the Punjab police. My dislike of him was not linked to his reported attempt to arrange my murder - my tribal background has enured me of such events - instead it was directly related to the innumerable firsthand testimonies of people who had suffered barbaric and inhuman treatment under his rule. Nor could I forget the assassination of Dr. Nazir. But with Bhutto in charge, Khar's sacking had little to do with his reign of oppression - which Bhutto had hardly discouraged. He was dismissed because he had become too powerful and had reduced the provincial PPP organization to a state of shambling chaos.

A large part of the PPP's organizational problems stemmed from Bhutto himself. Bhutto did not trust even the closest of his associates and kept them in check by pitting one against the other. In Sindh he had controlled his cousin Mumtaz through his rival Jatoi. Jatoi in turn, as chief minister, had no control of Jam Sadiq Ali, who reported directly to the Prime Minister. Jam Sadiq Ali, his hit man had total control of Sanghar, Pagaro's vote bank. Larkana was made into a division and Khalid Kharral became its first

Commissioner and was reporting directly to Bhutto.⁴⁴⁸ Rather than trying to bring his warring subordinates together, Bhutto encouraged them to squabble even further, all the while 'enjoying the complaints of one colleague about another'.⁴⁴⁹ In time I came to learn that Mumtaz Bhutto and Hafiz Pirzada loathed Khar,⁴⁵⁰ and during a meeting with Rafi Raza he had made his dislike of Khar and Pirzada quite clear to me. And they were not the only ones with axes to grind - the senior hierarchy of the PPP was rife with discord. Creating rivalries between his subordinates gave Bhutto a sense of security. As his confidant Rafi Raza himself admits: 'By nature suspicious, he sought to have 'dirt' available against his Ministers and leading Party members, and in early 1976, assigned to his [intelligence chiefs] the task of preparing secret dossiers about them, to be used [against them] in case of need.'⁴⁵¹ According to Raza again, this 'suspicion was reciprocated' by all of Bhutto's subordinates.

In Punjab the PPP was riven with factionalism. When Khar became Governor in 1972, Sheikh Rasheed was President of the Punjab PPP. Using his full powers as Governor, Khar unleashed an attack which put an abrupt end to Rasheed's political ambitions.

During 1972 and the first half of 1973, many pro-Rashid elements were harassed, intimidated, 'and/or thrown out of the party throughout the province. Only one branch organization in the city of Lahore - the one in Baghbanpura - was said to have any pro-Rashid functionaries. Khar was able to take these measures because as governor he controlled not only the government but the police.'⁴⁵²

In 1973 Khar replaced Sheikh Rasheed with one of his own men - Afzal Wattoo - as provincial party president, thereby ensuring that both the government and PPP of Punjab remained in his hands. As a minor landlord, Khar had the support of the feudal wing of the party and by crushing the left-wing elements of his own party, he had powerfully established himself within the province. Khar's complete control of Punjab and the provincial PPP directly impacted on his master's insecurities. Bhutto suddenly felt threatened. Announcing that Khar had become 'too big for his boots',⁴⁵³ he began actively encouraging PPP MPAs to complain to him about Khar. Responding to this, forty PPP MPAs submitted a petition to Bhutto complaining about Khar's corruption and violent abuse of power. By early February some MPAs, on Bhutto's prompting, began abusing Khar in base language on the floor of the Punjab Assembly. Some days later a number of them openly circulated a printed document titled 'WE ACCUSE' in which they listed thirty accusations of 'corruption and misconduct' against Khar. The

⁴⁴⁸ Previously Kharral had been Deputy Commissioner, Larkana District.

⁴⁴⁹ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

⁴⁵⁰ I was informed in November 1973 that at a Karachi dinner party both Mumtaz Bhutto and Pirzada openly 'abused' Khar, who of course, was not present at the scene.

⁴⁵¹ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

⁴⁵² Anwar H. Syed, *The Discourse and Politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto*. Macmillan, London, 1992, p. 208.

⁴⁵³ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

accusations included the amassing of millions of rupees and hundreds of acres of 'the finest' and 'best agricultural land in Muzaffargarh District', building a 'palatial' home in Lahore and a 'large house' in Islamabad, and 'a fleet of 6 cars including a Custom-built (sic), air-conditioned Mercedes 280 S...'. They ended their plaint with use of the following words: 'We are confident that our beloved Prime Minister and his Government shall not allow these acts of corruption and high-handedness and abuse of official power and influence, to go unpunished.'⁴⁵⁴ Rather pathetically no one dared to sign this document, but it achieved its intended results. Once satisfied that Khar had been sufficiently brought down to size, Bhutto sacked him. On 10 March Hanif Ramay was made Chief Minister of Punjab.

For a while Khar belligerently went around the province rousing support for himself. He even attempted to make contact with some Opposition members and made claims that some of Bhutto's lapses in power were far worse 'than anything Ayub Khan might have done at Tashkent'.⁴⁵⁵ But within two months he had made his peace with Bhutto, but not before Bhutto dissolved the Punjab PPP organization and appointed Meraj Muhammad Khalid, one of Khar's opponents, as provincial party president. Ten months later, Bhutto made Khar resign his provincial seat to be made governor of Punjab once more. Four months later, in July 1975, he sacked both Ramay and Khar. This time Khar, lacking even a provincial seat, had no role to play in legislative politics. He had effectively been cast out into the cold.

Khar's uncontrolled use of violence to achieve his aims had helped criminalize provincial politics. His choice of political henchmen - such as Iftikhar Tari, reputedly a gangland member from Lahore's notorious red-light area of *Heeramundi* - did much to reduce PPP party's esteem in the eyes of the general public. Stories about gross financial corruption of Khar and the PPP provincial Cabinet only added to the damage in the party's standing. Further, rent by factionalism and strife, the affairs of the Punjab PPP were in complete shambles. A large number of party workers had become disillusioned by Khar's actions. They had either left the PPP or had chosen to quit active politics.

The disunity within the Punjab PPP could not be blamed on Khar alone. The PPP leadership structure was by its very nature highly personalized: all authority remained with Bhutto who stood at the party's apex. This led to each faction clamoring and competing for his personal blessing, which would then provide it with power and precedence over its rivals. As, one writer put it: 'Legislators and party officials at the district and local levels made estimates of where contending dignitaries stood in Bhutto's esteem, and they shifted support accordingly'.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Quoted from the copy of this document in my records which was is sometime in March 1974.

⁴⁵⁵ Anwar H. Syed, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The party disunity combined with the brutal violence that Khar had introduced into Punjab politics with Bhutto's blessing, and the open corruption that had now come to permeate the new political elite, cost the PPP considerable support within the province. As a consequence, the large backing that Bhutto received from Punjab in the previous election (41.66 percent of the Punjab voters during the 1970 National Assembly election) was no longer there on the ground.

The political situation in the NWFP was not any better than in the Punjab. In the provincial elections of 1970 PPP had only won three seats in an Assembly total of forty representatives. With Aslam Khattak as governor they managed to form a majority coalition government under Inayatullah Gandapur, an independent MPA. The government was supported by ten MPAs of the Qayum Muslim League, the PPP and a host of independents who had been either bribed, cajoled or intimidated. Khattak and Gandapur soon proved to be more self-serving and servile to Bhutto than even the local PPP leaders such as Hayat Sherpao. Describing these two men, a writer stated:

[Aslam Khattak] assured Bhutto that he and Gandapur would carry out [Bhutto's] wishes more effectively than Sherpao could. To prove their point, as it were, they surpassed the PPP leaders in maligning the NAP and its president, Abdul Wali Khan, jailed more than 300 NAP workers, banned a NAP newspaper (*Shahbaz*), closed down a moderately pro-NAP weekly (the *Frontier Guardian*), and arrested its editor.⁴⁵⁷

While the coalition government was created at Bhutto's behest, Khattak and Gandapur did their utmost to weaken the PPP in the province. In return Sherpao, only supported the government within the limits of the provincial Assembly. Outside the Assembly he actively worked against it. The coalition government, suffering as it did from intrigue and disunity, was hardly a success. Bhutto's Federal Minister for Production, Rafi Raza, admitted that 'the performance of the new Provincial Government was even worse than that of its predecessor'.⁴⁵⁸ One could hardly expect Raza to see the previous NAP government in a less hostile light. While the Gandapur government achieved Bhutto's purpose of keeping the NAP out of government, it turned out to be a failure for the provincial PPP. Having won only three provincial seats in the 1970 elections the PPP was weak in the NWFP. The establishment of the Gandapur ministry did little to add new converts to the party in the province.

The only province where PPP enjoyed a relative degree of popularity was Sindh, and that was - as a result of the 1972 language riots - largely restricted to the rural parts of the province. In the 1970 elections Bhutto had cultivated the Sindhi landed gentry to his own advantage. Using his own popularity as a native-born Sindhi and enhancing his

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁴⁵⁸ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

support by cultivating the traditional 'feudal' leverage - by getting local personalities such as Makhdoom Talib-ul-Maula, the Jatois and the Talpurs, Pir of Ranipur and other *pirs* and *waderas* of Sindh to join his party - the PPP won 28 out of the total of 60 seats allocated to the Sindh Provincial Assembly. After the PPP entered into power, a large number of independent MPAs eagerly joined the party, making the task of forming a majority government that much easier. In the rural areas, with the majority of 'feudal' vote bank in his pocket, Bhutto was in near complete control, though he continued to fear Pir Pagaro and his Hur supporters, In the urban areas, where the *muhajir* community and the non-Sindhi elements were in dominance the situation was quite the opposite. As a result of the language riots, the job quota system - which limited the number of government jobs available to the *muhajirs* - and the exclusion of the metropolis of Karachi from the power structure, there was strong resentment of the PPP and its policies in the urban areas of Sindh.

* * *

In the meantime Balochistan continued to be on the boil. On 18 May 1974 Bhutto arranged for Ghous Buksh Bizenjo to be brought to the Prime Minister's residence to meet with him. Bhutto had always found Bizenjo to be amenable to deal with but with the unyielding stand taken by Mengal and Marri there was little Bizenjo could offer to him. Later a delegation of Baloch representatives went to Sihala Jail and met with Attaullah Mengal and Khair Buksh Marri.⁴⁵⁹ They were given a firm message by the two jailed leaders. First, they insisted, that Bhutto ought to get more serious in his negotiations and not resort to half-baked attempts at settling differences. Secondly, they maintained, that in view of all that had taken place it was no longer an issue of Balochistan alone, but a fight for the survival of democracy and the implementation of the 1973 Constitution. Mengal and Marri also sent a message to their Pathan colleagues in the NAP, as well as to others in the UDF leadership. I still have the original letter that was written to me by Ataullah Mengal which had been smuggled out by a sweeper. It was time, they believed, that a decision was taken by the UDF or whether it would take a firm stance on the issue of political detentions and the use of the Army in Balochistan. In June there was an acrimonious Budget Session in the National Assembly. Tempers became frayed and on occasion the language used was far from parliamentary. In one particular verbal exchange between Zahoor Ellahi and Khurshid Hasan Meer the language unfortunately descended to a level of coarse abuse. There was a feeling among some of the older parliamentarians - the very few that were left in the Assembly that the 1970 elections had brought in a large number of a new breed of politicians. Traditional parliamentary courtesies seemed to be in sudden decline.⁴⁶⁰ On 17 June I made a forty-five minute speech in the House on the forthcoming Budget. In my speech I asked for increased taxation on luxury goods and for greater austerity in our daily lives. Two

⁴⁵⁹ This delegation included: Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, Senator Wahid Kurd Senator Hashim Gilzai, leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

⁴⁶⁰ Unfortunately the coarseness of parliamentary debate has only worsened further over the subsequent years.

days later I received a telephone call from Bhutto congratulating me on my speech. My diary note states 'once again he promises an early settlement of the Baluchistan issue and ends our conversation by offering me use of his official rest house at Nathiagali'.⁴⁶¹

On 25 June while I was at Karachi I read in the evening papers that over nine hundred people had been slain by the Armed Forces in the Marri tribal area. The newspapers mentioned the use of the Pakistan Air Force in aerial bombing of the hapless civilians. I was deeply disturbed by the report and left the next day for Islamabad to discuss the incident with other Opposition leaders. Based on an official telegram sent by Abdul Wahid Kurd, a NAP senator about the massacre which I received, I called for a debate on the Balochistan issue the following day. The speakers included Mahmood Ali Kasuri, Wali Khan, Professor Ghafoor, Mufti Mahmood, Ali Ahmed Talpur and me. When it was my turn to speak I harshly criticized what I perceived had been a planned military exercise at the behest of the government.

Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari said that after failing to subdue the Baluch people, the Government had resorted to bombing and strafing.

He alleged that unarmed Baluch, including women and children, were killed.

The Government, he said, should restore 'democracy and freedom, which are the just rights of the people of the four provinces of Pakistan'.⁴⁶²

The Government decided to whitewash the event altogether. The Information Minister, Hafiz Pirzada, referred to it as not more than a minor 'retaliatory action' in Loralai District on 12 June. The facts that emerged later confirmed our worst fears. Faced with an Army encirclement, a large number of Marri tribesmen and their families had fled their homes and taken refuge in the Chamalang Valley, north of Marri territory, in an area occupied by the Pathan tribes of Balochistan, such as the Jaffars and the Musakhels. In retaliation for an attack on one of their patrols by a band of guerrillas, the Army decided to avenge themselves upon the hapless Marris temporarily camped at Chamalang.

On 1 July I flew to Quetta and joined Wali Khan on a short fact-finding trip to Balochistan. On 2 July, after visiting Fort Sandeman to offer our condolences to Maulvi Shamsuddin's family, we left for Loralai. I was given permission to see the Marri prisoners at Loralai Jail where Ahmed Nawaz Bugti and I were given first hand eye-witness accounts of the atrocities of the Army attack on Chamalang from two Pathan Musakhel mothaburs (tribal elders). Later the Deputy Commissioner was removed from his post for having granted us permission to meet with the prisoners who told us:

⁴⁶¹ Diary note: 19 June 1974.

⁴⁶² *Dawn*, 28 June 1974.

Recently we heard that an Army convoy was ambushed between Dukki and Ziarat by Marri tribesman and that 15 Army personnel were killed. Then we were informed that four units of the Army had come to reinforce the existing force on the borders of the Marri territory. A couple of days later two young Musakhel Pathans, Zahir Khan and Nadir Khan, both sons of Nasir Khan, who were grazing their sheep near their village were stopped by an Army platoon. They were asked if they were Marris. When they identified themselves as Musakhel Pathans they were then asked to guide the platoon to the nearest Marri settlement. When our boys refused to comply, they were ordered to hand over their rifles as well as all the livestock to the soldiers in punishment for their refusal. When the two boys refused to obey the soldiers' command they were both shot in cold-blood. One of them died instantly. The other survived long enough to tell his relatives, who soon reached there upon hearing the gunfire, what had taken place.

We are not sure of the exact date, but it was most likely 16 June when at about 10 or 11 a.m. we saw two low flying jets streaking in from the east, another similarly headed in from the west. We also witnessed a large concentration of heavily armed troops heading in the direction of Chamalang. A brief while later we heard a constant series of explosions which lasted for a long period. We later came to know that hundreds of Marri men, women and children were killed along with their livestock. Three Marri women who were collecting firewood away from their settlement later took refuge in the house of Malik Tajuddin Luni Pathan. For all we know they were the only survivors.

We later heard from some Army jawans at a local *chaikhana* that this attack was in retaliation of the earlier ambush of the Army convoy. The government forces were determined to liquidate all anti-Pakistan elements but had called a temporary hah due to the impending visit of Opposition leaders to the area. From 9 July onwards the combined Army and Air Force would recommence their action with the intention of annihilating all traces of Marri resistance.

The senior of the two Mothabars then informed us:

On a very recent visit to Harnai I met with an Army *subedar* at a local *chaikhana* who told me that he was a paratrooper who had participated in the action against the Marris. The *subedar* said many members of his section had been dropped by parachute at night time near identified Marri settlements. At dawn they surrounded the settlements and attacked them killing all those who resisted. After burning down their homes, they arrested all the able-bodied men and took away all their livestock. When I asked the subedar about the Marri women, he told me that they took with them only the pretty ones for obvious reasons and

left the others to fend for themselves. The senior Mothabar then confirmed that in his presence alone he saw the Army auctioning off over 15,000 head of captured cattle.

The junior *Mothabar* corroborated his colleagues account and added: 'At the end of last year [1973] it was common knowledge in the Lorelei Bazaar that eight young Marri girls had been forcibly kept in the Army barracks for sexual amusement of the troops and that generally captured Baluch women were regularly subjected to sexual assault.'

Despite being sickened by these accounts I had them typewritten and handed over copies to the Press and to any politician with a modicum of objectivity but nothing ever came of it. On our return to Islamabad a number of us in the Opposition, including Wali Khan, Pir Pagaro and I sent separate similarly worded telegrams to Fazal Ellahi, the President.

[T]he Action Committee of the UDF hereby brings to your notice that the actions taken by the federal government in Baluchistan are unconstitutional and unlawful. In compliance with such orders the Pakistan Army and Air Force are indiscriminately shelling, strafing and killing innocent inhabitants, including women and children. Their properties are being destroyed and their livestock looted. Concentration camps have been established where innocent and patriotic people of Baluchistan are being kept and maltreated. Their women are dishonored and innocent children tortured.

Implementation of such orders of the federal government by the Pakistan Army and Air Force is damaging the unity of the country and may lead to its further disintegration.

Thus a reign of terror is prevailing in the whole province for the simple reason that the people of Baluchistan did not vote for the People's Party in the last general elections.

We reminded Ellahi of his oath of office and requested him to intervene. For all the good that came of it we might as well have been whistling in the dark. In the meantime the Army blockade of the Marri area continued. No one could cross the Army lines without express permission. I still have in my possession a slip of paper issued by one Captain Zahid Mahmood, Adjutant of Kahan Camp to Khair Buksh Marri's brother, Ali Ahmed Khan, and dated 28 August 1974. It states rather turgidly, '[Ali Marri] is permitted to go to Kohlu with four servants and come back'.

In the meantime efforts began anew to win me over. On one occasion, on 17 July, Aziz Ahmed, the Foreign Minister, made a special effort to talk to me during a break in the Assembly session. He walked across to where I was sitting and expressed his regrets

that he found me sitting with the Opposition. He proceeded to inform me that the Prime Minister had an extremely high opinion of me and suggested that I should play my role of an independent MNA 'more constructively'. I replied that as far as I was concerned I was doing only what my conscience told me to do. While we were talking Abdul Qayum Khan, the Interior Minister joined us. Qayum Khan proceeded to tell me that the situation in Balochistan was 'extremely cruel', and that I should do my utmost to help find a compromise. The Army, according to him had already lost a large number of officers and men and had now adopted a vindictive attitude.

Only two days later I received a report from Mukhtar Hassan,⁴⁶³ a newspaper correspondent who had just returned from Balochistan. He told me that while he was there two Marri women were raped near Balpat station by soldiers. The culprits were later caught and given only extra drill as punishment. In another incident, one Lai Han Marri's wife was abducted in Kohlu and raped by several soldiers. Rape in any society is a most reprehensible crime. But when a country's Army, whose sworn and only legitimate role is that to defend the borders of a country, indulges in criminal raping of its own hapless citizens it is nothing less than an act of treason. What disgusted me most was the fact that only token punishment was being awarded by the Army for the perpetrators of this most monstrous of crimes. The Pakistan Army was behaving as if it had occupied a foreign country, and an iniquitous occupation at that. It reminded one of the atrocities committed by the Army in East Pakistan. A fortnight later a PPP Minister of State Taj Muhammad Jamali, admitted to me in person that he was shocked by atrocities being committed by the Army. He also confirmed that an Army colonel had been killed near Dera Bugti. Another colonel, I learnt, had been killed near Duki.

During this period there was an intermittent bombing campaign taking place in the urban areas of Balochistan. These terrorist bomb explosions resulted in the deaths of numerous innocent civilians and received wide coverage in the media. Much was written in the Press to condemn the Opposition who were chosen to carry the blame for these events. Much later it was revealed that in fact it was the FSF behind these 'dirty' operations.

On 13 October 1974, two bomb explosions were caused by one Taj Muhammad, who was supplied 8 dynamite sticks for this purpose by the FSF. He was arrested by the Quetta police, but was released after the intercession of the Director-General of FSF. The idea was to discredit the Opposition in the eyes of the public for indulging in arson and terrorism.⁴⁶⁴

It was evident that the lives of civilians were of little value in comparison to gaining political objectives.

⁴⁶³ Mukhtar Hassan, then senior correspondent of the Urdu magazine, covering Balochistan.

⁴⁶⁴ *The Government White Paper on Performance of the Bhutto Regime*, Volume III, 1979, p. 30.

On 7 August I visited Gul Aurangzeb of Swat and his wife Naseem to offer condolences at the death of her father, the former President Ayub Khan. While there I met a serving Brigadier who informed me that the Army Intelligence strongly suspected that I was a conduit for foreign funds meant for the Baloch guerrillas. The very next day this news was confirmed by my wife. It appeared that recently my brother-in-law Bashir Mazari had sent Rs. 85,000 from Lahore to my bank account in Karachi for a car he wished to purchase in Karachi. My wife, Souriya, told me that she had discovered that Army Intelligence had arrived at the bank to trace the source of these funds. Subsequently I came to learn that in a small building directly behind my Karachi house, on a property belonging to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Army had set up high-tech devices directed at monitoring conversations held in my residence even outdoors, and to tap all my telephone lines. This was hardly the first telephone tap, the government had been monitoring all my telephone conversations for quite some time now. Or? one occasion my eldest son Sherazam picked up the phone to make a call, only to discover his younger brother Sher Afzal was speaking on the line. It momentarily bewildered him as he could see Sher Afzal sitting on a nearby table eating a snack. Apparently, one of the agencies monitoring the phone, had decided to replay a previous conversation, for reasons known only to them.

In late August I came to learn that Bhutto - along with Pirzada, Jatoi, Rafi Raza and Aziz Ahmed - had himself met with the Baloch leaders at Sihala jail. He had offered them coalition governments in Balochistan and the NWFP. His offer had been swiftly rejected. A day or so later I was asked by Bhutto to meet with him in Karachi. On the evening of 30 August I met him at Karachi. I took the opportunity of remonstrating with him about the continuing military action against the tribesmen, especially the use of aircraft against them. It was then, in my solitary presence, that Bhutto, finally, openly admitted that military aircraft had been used in Balochistan, but he insisted that no bombing had taken place, the aerial attacks, according to him had been restricted to strafing and rockets.⁴⁶⁵ He then asked me to meet with the Baloch leaders, once again, to try and arrange for a settlement. It appeared that his own meeting with them had not gone too well. According to Bhutto, Attaullah had been totally inflexible. He had told Bhutto that their 'paths now went in two totally different directions' and then asked to leave the meeting. Bizenjo had called Bhutto 'insincere' to his face. And in Bhutto's own words, Khair Buksh had 'stared at him unblinkingly, with folded arms throughout the meeting and not uttered a single word'. After listening to Bhutto describe his meeting with the Baloch leaders I told him frankly that I saw no prospects of any agreement unless he made a magnanimous gesture of some sort. Without committing himself Bhutto indicated that a gesture from him was possible but was insistent that I meet with the three detained leaders to see if something could be worked out.

⁴⁶⁵ The government had repeatedly denied the use of military aircraft in Balochistan on several occasions in the National Assembly, as well as in the Press.

Within weeks of the dismissal of the NAP government in Balochistan in February 1973 a disparate group of Baloch guerrillas had sprung up largely in the Marri and Mengal areas. Among the Marris, after the arrest of the Parari leader Sher Muhammad Marri, the leadership had passed on to Hazar Khan Marri. These guerrilla groups, despite their meager numbers - only a few hundred men divided into separate geographical bands - constantly harassed Army convoys. Adopting the classical guerrilla approach of avoiding any large-scale encounters with the Armed Forces, they used their knowledge of their local mountain terrain to great advantage. According to a later government report, between the period of 1973 and 1975, there were 178 major recorded Army encounters with the guerrillas. Eighty-four of these clashes took place in the Marri area and the remaining were scattered widely over the Baloch inhabited area - in particular, Khuzdar and Jhalawan.⁴⁶⁶ Despite the Army's enormous 80,000 man force it would find itself increasingly frustrated with its inability to deal with small groups of men who attacked at unexpected moments and then swiftly melted away into the mountainside. The Army's heavy-handed approach of avenging itself on the innocent, ordinary tribal folk only worsened the situation.

One relatively lesser known part of this tragic episode of our history is the involvement of five idealistic young men who decided that they would help change the world for the better. It must be borne in mind that the early 1970s was a period of youthful idealism around the world. It was a time when the likes of Che Guevara were eulogized and a great many students at US and European universities had become preoccupied with anti-Vietnam war movement. The politicized atmosphere in these foreign universities had its affect on Pakistani students studying there. The savage brutality of the Army crackdown in East Pakistan had been given wide and uncensored coverage in the Western Press, more particularly the British newspapers. It is not surprising that a small band of Pakistani students soon became embroiled in revolutionary zeal.

These lads - some at Cambridge and others at the then socialist hotbed of the London School of Economics - came under the influence of Muhammad Bhabha - a firebrand advocate of Marxist liberation doctrine - who belonged to a wealthy Ismaili family from Karachi. These young men all came from elite families and educational backgrounds. Duleep 'Johnny' Dass, was the son of one of the senior-most officers of the Air Force in the 1950s, my friend Air Commodore Balwant Dass, and had been educated at Karachi Grammar School. The two brothers Asad and Rashid Rahman were sons of the retired Supreme Court Judge, Justice S. A. Rahman. The fourth was Ahmed Rashid, now a well-known Lahore-based writer. Later they were joined by Muhammad Ali Talpur, a

⁴⁶⁶ 'Lists of Incidents Showing Firing Cases in Baluchistan from February 22, 1973 to December 31, 1975', Annexure G-5, pp. 108-13, and 'Details of Firing and Other Acts of Sabotage/Terrorism in Baluchistan during 1974-75', Annexure G-3, pp. 99-103, in State v. Abdul Wali Khan and Others. Special Court, Hyderabad, 15 April 1976. (Quoted in Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York, 1981, p. 39.)

young Baloch nationalist and son of the MNA Mir Ali Ahmed Talpur, who had been greatly affected by the events in Balochistan. The five of them joined the armed guerrilla camps led by Hazar Khan in the Marri hills. All of them donned traditional Baloch clothing, learnt to speak fluent Balochi and some even adopted Baloch names. They abandoned the comforts that they had been accustomed to and began living the rugged existence of simple Baloch tribesmen, eating the austere diet that accompanied their new chosen life in the barren hills, sleeping on hard ground and travelling by foot in the tough mountainous terrain. I was later told that their mentor Muhammad Bhabha only joined them for a brief while in the hills. He soon found himself unable to cope with the harsh existence.

These youngsters soon began actively participating in the guerrilla campaign. Within a short while the Military Intelligence came to hear about them and did its best to capture them. Some months later, according to reports that reached me much later, Johnny Dass was caught near the Sindh border as he was making his way to Karachi for a visit. He is said to have been betrayed by a Quetta businessman by the name of Ghulam Dastagir who had claimed to be a sympathizer but was in fact in the pay of the intelligence services.⁴⁶⁷ In Army custody young Johnny was so badly tortured that he died soon after. Sadly, to this very day his parents, my dear friends Air-Commodore Balwant and Mavis Dass, have no knowledge about where their eldest son was buried.

I suppose a large number of people would have called Johnny 'a traitor', but to him and his companions what some members of the Pakistan Army had done to the majority civilians of East Pakistan would probably have been deemed to be a greater form of 'treason'. I suppose abstract concepts such as 'patriotism' are largely a matter of individual perception. What Johnny Dass and his companions considered to be a better future for his countrymen was, I suppose, his version of Pakistani 'patriotism' - even though it went against the majority held view. Filled with the idealistic enthusiasm of the young he had chosen to leave the comforts of his privileged existence and fight for the rights of what he believed were the oppressed people. In the end he made the ultimate sacrifice for his beliefs fighting with courage and commitment against injustice and oppression.

* * *

In August 1974 a BSO student named Majid died in a grenade explosion during a failed attempt to assassinate Bhutto in Quetta. I was to later learn that the Afghans had trained a team of Baloch extremists to kill Bhutto during his visit to the province. Majid must have been a member of that team. Sadly, by now the Balochistan situation had become a playground for competing regional interests. Afghanistan, assisted by USSR,

⁴⁶⁷ This person is said to have also later arranged Asadullah Mengal's assassination and Ahmed Shah Kurd's murder.

wished to convert what had been purely an act of tribal resistance against federal despotism into a war of liberation. Afghanistan had a long held enmity with Pakistan over the Durand Line issue and the situation in Balochistan provided it with an opportunity to settle old scores. The USSR's role was more ambivalent. Despite the contention of those convinced that the Russian wished to grab Balochistan in their century-long obsession to find a warm water port, the USSR played a relatively minor role in the course of events. Future events would only prove that the USSR was more concerned with protecting its soft underbelly - the Central Asian Republics - from the threatened influx of radical Islamic influence from the south. The USSR was clearly allied to Pakistan's rivals in the region - India and Afghanistan - and as such was in a position to offer them assistance whenever called upon. But Afghanistan was not the only player in Balochistan. Iran's Muhammad Reza Pahlavi was also determined to make his own forceful imprint on the region.

Muhammad Reza's grandfather had been an illiterate peasant named Savad-Kuhi who had joined the Army as an ordinary soldier.⁴⁶⁸ His father Reza Khan had joined the Persian Cossack Brigade as an illiterate boy of fourteen who rose to the rank of a colonel before forcing Ahmed Shah, the last Qajar ruler, to appoint him commander of the Cossack Brigade in 1921 and a few days later commander of all the Persian Armed Forces.⁴⁶⁹ Within five years Reza Khan had declared himself *Shahenshah* of Iran. His son, Muhammad Reza was, unlike his father, weak and hesitant and acutely aware of his family's humble origins. After initial political setbacks in the 1950s, he tried to overcome his inherent inadequacies by using despotism, grandiose gold-braided uniforms and theatrical pomp - an estimated \$300 million was spent on staging the extravaganza celebrating the '2,500th anniversary of Iranian Monarchy at Persepolis in 1971'.⁴⁷⁰ With the explosion of oil prices in the early 1970s Iran suddenly acquired enormous wealth and as a direct consequence, Muhammad Reza found himself propelled onto the international stage. Taking upon himself the task of becoming the region's policeman he started to see threats everywhere. He now feared that the 'contagion' of Baloch nationalism across Iran's eastern borders might spread secessionism within Iranian Balochistan.

In 1973 the Shah had told a New York Times columnist C. L. Sulzberger: 'If Pakistan disintegrates another Vietnam situation could develop. We must see to it that Pakistan doesn't fall to pieces. This would produce a terrible mess, an Indochina situation of new and larger dimensions. I dread to think of it.' According to Sulzberger the Shah made it

⁴⁶⁸ Ryszard Kapuscinski, *Shah of Shahs*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1882. p. 18.

⁴⁶⁹ Sandra Mackey, *The Iranians*, Dutton, USA, 1996. p. 166.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 236. (At this gathering of Heads of States and governments. General Yahya Khan is said to have caused much embarrassment by his excessive drinking. In an attempt to preclude him from attending the main function an attempt was made to hide his dress clothes.)

clear that if Pakistan fell apart he planned to 'seize [Balochistan] before anyone else does'.⁴⁷¹

It is believed that it was largely as a result of the Shah's military assistance that the tide of war changed into the Army's favor. In mid-1974 Iran sent thirty American-made Huey Cobra helicopter gunships along with their Irani crew to Pakistan. Developed for the Vietnam war the Cobra gunships had formidable firepower, which included a 20mm cannon which spewed out 750 rounds a minute. Previously the troops attempted to block off guerrilla escape routes by concentrating soldiers at key points on the trails. These tactics were easily overcome by the guerrillas who used their superior knowledge of the terrain. With the Cobra gunships the Army could send them ahead of the guerrillas sealing off their escape.

With the possession of the Cobra gunships the Army planned a new campaign. Once again it chose the fifty-square-mile area of the Chamalang Valley. The valley provided rich grazing pasture for the Marri nomadic tribesmen. In the summer of 1974 a much greater than normal number of Marris had moved to the pastures of Chamalang. With many of the men in the hills resisting the Army presence a large contingent of older men, women and children had joined the other nomads in the valley. These people had sought, what they believed was, a refuge from the incessant Cobra gunship attacks in the highlands. The Army now decided to take advantage of the presence of this large concentration of Marri families and launched Operation Chamalang on 3 September 1974. By attacking the tent villages of their families the Army hoped to lure the fighting tribesmen down from the hills. The strategy worked and thousands of armed Marris poured down from the hills to defend their wives and children.

The Marri tribesmen defended themselves with their simple Darra-made 303 Lee Enfields⁴⁷² and used the mountainous landscape surrounding the valley to the best of their advantage. It is said that they fought for three consecutive days and nights, braving heavy artillery and mortar fire and relentless attacks by the invulnerable Cobra gunships. Finally, finding themselves out of ammunition they had little choice but to retreat and escape into the hills.

It was the turning point in the guerrilla war. The Marris, along with the Parari guerrilla force, never really recovered from the incident...

Army accounts claim that 125 guerrillas were killed and 900 captured, and independent estimates suggest that at least 50,000 sheep and 550 camels were captured at Chamalang and auctioned off by the army at bargain prices to non-

⁴⁷¹ C. L. Sulzberger, 'Belief in Crude Reality', *New York Times*, 22 April 1973.

⁴⁷² These rifles were of a local and hand-made manufacture and came from Darra Adam Khel, a town in NWFP known for producing such weapons.

Baluch in the Punjab. The Baluch minimize their own losses and claim to have killed 446 Pakistani soldiers.⁴⁷³

The incident at Chamalang was another blot in the history of our country. There was never any attempt by the Marris to secede from Pakistan. Faced with unjust despotism of the central government in Islamabad these simple tribesmen reacted in the only manner in which they knew how to. They took their rifles and took to the hills to defend themselves against what they perceived as unwarranted aggression. Using the controlled media Islamabad played on the emotions of a naive populace by painting the disgruntled Baloch as traitors. The Marris, largely of the Bijarani clan, were no longer treated as an ordinary Baloch tribe but brutally set upon as if they were members of some revolutionary political movement. No doubt the Pararis of Balochistan were an insurgent force but their numbers were few. By pushing the Marris to the brink a guerrilla army was needlessly created. The Pakistan Army, not having learnt any lessons from East Pakistan, was once more used as an adjunct of oppression and asked to deal with this new set of 'traitors'. In the end thousands of Marris, hapless citizens of Pakistan, found themselves destitute, homeless and in exile when they eventually crossed the border and sought sanctuary in Afghanistan.

* * *

On 2 September, three days after my meeting with Bhutto and, coincidentally, a day before Operation Chamalang was launched, I visited Attaullah Mengal at Sahiwal Jail. He was not in good health and complaining about pain in his chest because of his heart problem. We discussed the Balochistan situation in detail. Attaullah mentioned that he had demanded a general amnesty for all political prisoners in Pakistan from the government. He confided that if that was not forthcoming he would settle for a general amnesty in Balochistan. Both of us were in agreement that there was a complete absence of foreign pressure on Bhutto otherwise he would not have behaved cold-bloodedly towards Balochistan. I found Attaullah perplexed at Bhutto's insistence on regularly sending emissaries to meet with him in jail. Neither of us were completely sure whether Bhutto was serious in his intentions. Over the months there had been many negotiations and he still had not made a single genuine gesture which would have indicated honesty of purpose. Attaullah felt that it seemed more as if Bhutto was sending people to meet with him so that he could receive eye-witness accounts of Attaullah's stay in jail. Was he really expecting the Baloch leaders to succumb under pressure? Such an event was highly unlikely. Or else, given Bhutto's propensity for taking pleasure in making people suffer, he just savored hearing the news related to him by his messengers. During my visit Attaullah made it clear to me that he was in no position to consider the idea of any settlement, even if it were possible. Before making even the vaguest of commitments he

⁴⁷³ Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow*, op. cit., p. 38.

would have to make prior consultations with his other colleagues as well as the Baloch fighting in the hills and bearing the brunt of the government's harsh diktat.

The next day I went by road to Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) Jail. The Jail Superintendent made me wait over an hour before I could meet Khair Buksh Marri. I found Khair Buksh in a bitter mood. He took pleasure in making the Punjabi Superintendent who insisted on being present at our meeting - squirm by heaping insults upon him. Like Attaullah, Khair Buksh was insistent that there was no question of a settlement without taking - the views of his men fighting in the hills into account but was surprisingly agreeable to the idea of an honorable solution, if one could be found. He talked a great deal which was unlike his usual self. Though I found him quite adjusted to the rigours of jail life but, he admitted to me that he found himself lonely and 'bottled up'.

That very day I travelled from Lyallpur to Mianwali to meet with Ghous Buksh Bizenjo. I was quite surprised to find him waiting cheerfully for me in a guest house outside the jail. He seemed to be better looked after than either of his other two colleagues. A lavish tea was soon served to us and we sat down for a lengthy chat which lasted for about two hours. He told me 'that under the circumstances Bhutto could have been the best person for all of us but instead he has chosen to try to destroy us'. Bizenjo was very agreeable to the idea of an honorable settlement but was insistent that first the agreement reached at Murree be implemented, politically detained prisoners be released in Balochistan and the total withdrawal of the army from the province.

It needs to be mentioned that at the time of my meeting with Bhutto, he must have been well aware of the Army's plans in Chamalang. On the day I met Khair Buksh and Bizenjo the Army operation had been fully commenced. Unknown to us as we talked, tribesmen and women were being strafed, mortared and rocketed in Chamalang. The question needed to be asked as to why did Bhutto ask me to meet the leaders at this particular moment? Was it an exercise to delude us into a false sense of security and then be hit by a hard dose of military reality? Only Bhutto, who was a known Machiavellian by nature, knew the answer.

News of the Chamalang incident reached me late. I had spent a week in Sonmiani, and found myself - as was the case in those days without telephones, newspapers or even electricity completely cut off from all but urgent telegrams, which would take a couple of days to reach. It was only when I reached Karachi on 18 September that I was informed by Ahmed Raza Kasuri that the Army had occupied Chamalang. He told me that about 800 Marris and over 200 soldiers had been killed in the fighting.⁴⁷⁴ I was shattered by the enormity of the event.

⁴⁷⁴ Kasuri's initial estimate was later contradicted by more reliable reports from Quetta. A few days later when Ahmed Nawaz Bugti returned from Quetta he told me that 280 Marris had been killed and 130 injured. According to him, a further 42 had been taken prisoner and about 800 women and children had been forcibly detained in a

A day later at an *Iftar* party I met a young Army captain who proudly informed me that the Army had won a tremendous victory at Chamalang. According to him the soldiers had killed 150 Marris, while losing only 18 men including a GCGS. It seemed the number of killed changed depending on whom you talked with.

At Karachi, Ghulam Faruque Khan brought a message from Wali Khan for me. The NAP leader had expressed his concern at news of the Balochistan massacre and wished to let me know that he believed a delegation of Opposition leaders should meet with President Fazal Ellahi, General Tikka Khan and the National Assembly Speaker. To me this manner of protest seemed a bit weak in view of the enormity of events. Over the next few days I held a series of meetings with other Opposition leaders, including Professor Ghafoor and Maulana Noorani, to convince them that stronger measures were called for.

On 29 September 1974 a special UDF Action Committee was held at Karachi for which Wali Khan, Mufti Mahmood, Arbab Sikandar and others arrived in Karachi. At the committee meeting Dr. Hai, the MNA from Balochistan suggested that the UDF should focus on mustering support in Lahore and from student bodies. Mufti Mahmood and Pir Pagaro were of the opinion that the Opposition leaders tour Punjab and canvas support there. I opposed these ideas and instead insisted that the UDF leadership should go directly to Quetta. I was all in favour of defying the Section 144 in force at the time in Quetta, and proposed leading public agitation against the slaughter of the Marris. I was convinced that our arrests would openly demonstrate our solidarity with the plight of the hapless tribesmen. Mufti Mahmood and Noorani expressed their inability for the moment to leave for Quetta and suggested that we all meet there by 8 October. I was disappointed by the delay but by then it had been decided to go to Islamabad to try and enlist support of the foreign governments by meeting their representatives in Islamabad.

On 2 October the UDF Action Committee held a press conference. I had helped draft a telegram on behalf of the committee which was sent a few days later to President Fazal Ellahi and to the Army and Air Force Chiefs. In the telegram we referred to the 'indiscriminate shelling, strafing and killing by the Pakistan Army and Air Force of innocent inhabitants including women and children' as 'nothing but genocide'. We added that 'it appears that no lesson has been learnt from the tragedy of East Pakistan'.⁴⁷⁵

We then personally handed over a specially prepared six page detailed memorandum to the heads of all the diplomatic missions, as well as the Islamic Secretariat. We made it

concentration camp Hashim Gilzai, who also returned from Quetta, submitted a report to the UDF on 29 September that about 400 Marris had been killed and 100,000 head of livestock forcibly confiscated.

⁴⁷⁵ Excerpts from the telegrams sent to the Chiefs of Staff of the Pakistan Army and Air Force on 7 October 1974.

clear why we felt it necessary to approach them directly. 'As nearly the whole information media in the country are controlled by the regime, it was impossible for the democratic opposition to get the truth across to the world or even make an effective rebuttal of the falsities spread by the regime within the country and abroad.'⁴⁷⁶ Our grounds for approaching them on the Balochistan issue were made clear:

[We are] convinced that this is no longer an internal issue - the fact that Prime Minister Bhutto had already made it an international issue when he took the foreign ambassadors to Baluchistan - but one that involves the violation of the internationally recognized norms of civilized behavior and of human values as universally recognized.⁴⁷⁷

The Memorandum, besides being detailed and lengthy, was extremely hard hitting. It gave a detailed account of the deaths and deprivation that was taking place throughout Balochistan, while highlighting the recent Army and Air Force actions at Chamalang. Mention was also made of the thousands of women and children who were languishing in concentration camps set up in Kohlu, Loralai, Chamalang and other places in Jhalawan. Notice was also given about the unnecessarily cruel act of blockading the Marri and Jhalawan areas and stopping grain and other food items which was responsible for cases of starvation and malnutrition among the local population. The widespread use of torture to extract information was also communicated to them.

On 3 October 1974, early in the morning at 6.45 a.m., I received an unexpected visit from Zafar Ansari and Altaf Hussain Qureshi, owner editor of the *Urdu Digest*. At this early hour Ansari suggested to me that I accompany them to meet with Bhutto in connection with a settlement on Balochistan. By now Ansari was no longer a reliable member of the Opposition and I privately held serious doubts about his sense of commitment. I politely refused their offer. The very next day I received a telephone call from Mustafa Sadiq, owner of a rightwing daily newspaper, asking me to participate in finding a peaceful solution in Balochistan. It became apparent that Sadiq, along with Ansari and Qureshi were all acting on the government's specific instructions. All three had by now established close links with Khar.

We, at the UDF, had already notified all the foreign missions that the UDF leadership would be calling on them on 7 October. Soon we had learnt that the government had contacted all the missions and told them in no uncertain terms that it would consider it to be an 'unfriendly act' if any of them received the UDF leaders. Early in the morning of 7 October the Hungarian Ambassador unexpectedly called on me to express his regrets that neither he nor the USSR and Czechoslovakian Ambassadors could receive us at their embassies. It became obvious to us that the government's threat had worked.

⁴⁷⁶ 'Memorandum submitted to the Heads of Diplomatic Missions in P by the Action Committee of the United Democratic Front-UDF - on the situation of Baluchistan', 7 October 1974, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

We proceeded with our schedule and called on the embassies of the United States, United Kingdom, West Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia and Iraq. We were received at these missions and were given a patient hearing after which we handed them each a copy of our memorandum on Balochistan.

The next day I flew to Quetta along with the other UDF leaders. On our flight we were accompanied by PPP's Nasim Ahmed, Secretary Information, who was taking a large group of foreign journalists to Balochistan.⁴⁷⁸ It was an obvious move on the part of the government to refute the Opposition's Memorandum on Balochistan.⁴⁷⁹ At Quetta we met a number of Marris who complained that as their women and children were fleeing from the Army they had been set upon by some local Pathan tribesman who had beaten them and deprived them of all their livestock. I was appalled to hear of this and felt that it was an act worthy of scavenging beasts. Wali Khan assured them that he would try and help them out.

On 11 October, the Opposition held a large public meeting at Quetta to commemorate Balochistan Day. A number of us addressed the crowd, including Wali Khan, Mufti Mahmood, Professor Ghafoor, Ali Ahmed Marri and myself. Mufti Mahmood's speech was particularly insulting towards Bhutto, he ridiculed him mercilessly much to the crowd's delight. The following day I returned to Karachi in a despondent mood. Though I felt that I had done as much as I could to help the Baloch cause, it did not seem enough. The suffering still continued relentlessly.

On 15 October a special news bulletin on Balochistan appeared on the television at Bhutto's instructions. It was announced that 5000 Baloch insurgents had surrendered and the rest had been given two months, until 15 December, to lay down their arms. It was noticeable that no mention was made about the detained political leadership of the province. Four days later I received news that an Army Brigade had just been beaten back by the Marris. Having suffered over 60 casualties, the Army Command had to use a force of full division strength to regain their lost territory. It was apparent that though the Marris had been badly mauled at Chamalang the fight had not yet gone out of them. In fact they continued skirmishing for another twelve months before most of them withdrew across the border into Afghanistan.

⁴⁷⁸ Nasim Ahmed was the newly appointed Federal Secretary Information. Previously he had been Dawn's reporter in London and was rewarded for services rendered to Bhutto.

⁴⁷⁹ Two days later on 10 October a team of foreign journalists met with the Opposition and told us that they had been taken by helicopter to the Marri town of Kohlu where they interviewed Ali Gul Tungiani, a local Marri leader, who had spoken to them in Balochi. They played the recorded interview on their cassette recorder and provided us the official translation of Ali Gul Tungiani's spoken Balochi. There were major discrepancies between what Tungiani had said and the written version. We helped correct it. Ali Ahmed Khan, Khair Buksh Marri's brother, who had managed to escape from Kohlu a few days earlier, provided the journalists with a graphic description of the true state of affairs in the Marri area.

On 20 October the government published its White Paper on Balochistan. It was a document which served to mislead rather than to provide any accurate or unbiased information. It blandly stated that 385 Baloch 'insurgents' had been killed - a gross underestimate. The report claimed that a further 5501 had surrendered - a claim that was highly questionable. It insisted that the situation in Balochistan was now normal - which I knew to be a complete fallacy. Further, it announced that the Army force would soon be withdrawn - an exercise in complete mendacity. The Army was to eventually leave well after Bhutto's overthrow.

* * *

I had decided to take a brief break from political activity. There was a parliamentary delegation going to Australia and New Zealand and I had been invited to join it as deputy-leader. While I declined the offer of becoming the deputy-leader, I decided that as the trip was a parliamentary one and had no official connection with the government, there would be no harm in participating in it as a representative of the opposition. Though I had left with the permission of the leaders of the Opposition, my decision had its critics. I later learnt that while I was away, Maulana Noorani, among others, had been telling people that I had sold out and joined hands with the government.

In Australia we first visited Canberra and met the prime minister and a host of parliamentarians, and then were taken for an extensive tour of the country. After ten fairly hectic officially organized days we left for New Zealand. Arriving in Wellington I was pleasantly surprised to see my son waiting to receive me at the airport along with the officially organized reception. Shehryar, had taken a short break from studying for his impending law exams to drive four hundred miles from Auckland to New Zealand's capital city to receive me. After the tour officially came to an end at Auckland I continued my stay there privately. Besides having my son at a university there I got a chance to spend time with my old friend Ken Rutland. Ken had acted as guardian for Shehryar ever since he had arrived in New Zealand as a thirteen-year-old schoolboy. Not only is New Zealand a truly beautiful country, it is also one of the most egalitarian democracies in the world. The New Zealand prime minister was provided a government chauffeured car only for official duties. The rest of the time he had to drive his car around himself. When he travelled by air it was always on a commercial flight and he had to carry his own briefcase as no flunkies were made available for him. At the other end he would be met by just another chauffeur who would take him to his place of business. There were no flags, police escorts, sirens or other trappings of pomposity. After Bhutto's Pakistan it was refreshing to be in such a place.

I returned to Pakistan at the end of November and by 2 December was back in Islamabad. I was met at the airport by Wali Khan and we went directly to Sihala to meet the Baloch leaders. I spent a number of days in regular attendance at the trial. Of one

occasion I drove to their detention centre hoping to meet Attaullah and Khair Buksh, but was denied permission by the authorities. After the Chamalang incident I had lost all hope in Bhutto. While at Islamabad I was invited to attend a dinner for Bhutto given by Hafiz Pirzada. I avoided it by flying to Karachi that same evening.

A few days later, on 22 December, I received a telephone call from Bhutto. As usual he sounded as friendly as ever. It was as if nothing had ever happened. He informed me that he was planning to fly to the US and Canada in February 1975 and wanted me to accompany him. I declined his invitation much to his surprise. Rather than take my answer at face value he asked me to think it over for a couple of days. The very next evening I received a call from Agha Shahi, the Foreign Secretary. He asked me to confirm my plans for the US and Canada. I told him that I had already declined the invitation. A few days later I met Hafiz Pirzada and told him to convey my regrets to Bhutto as I had no intention of participating in any state visit until the Balochistan issue was resolved. Two days later on 28 December, I had just arrived in my family town of Rojhan when I received an urgent telephone call from Aftab Sohail, the Prime Minister's Secretary. He wished to enquire about my decision on the overseas trip. I told him that I had declined and had already conveyed my regrets through Hafiz Pirzada. Though I was surprised at his persistence in expecting me to change my mind, he seemed equally surprised at my refusal to accompany his boss.

On 21 January 1975 a UDF meeting was held at Zahoor Ellahi's place in Islamabad. It was decided virtually unanimously that in future none of the UDF parties would bother participating in by-elections. The decision was based on the simple premise that as the government had been consistently manipulating the result of every by-election so far it was pointless to participate in them. Further, we felt that by boycotting these elections the results would be rendered meaningless and bereft of true electoral legitimacy. The only party who disagreed with this decision was Maulana Noorani and his JUP. Their opposition to this proposal had been vehement. Having failed to convince the other members of the UDF of their viewpoint, the JUP withdrew temporarily from the UDF. They put up their candidates in the by-elections, but lost miserably because of the massive rigging. This was the first crack within the Opposition alliance.

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On 8 February 1975 my eldest son Sherazam told me that he had just heard on the radio that Hayat Muhammad Sherpao, the PPP Senior Minister of the NWFP had been killed in a bomb explosion at Peshawar University. The news saddened me as I had met Sherpao on a few occasions and had found him to be very personable.

There are many theories about who arranged his assassination. One theory that cannot easily be dismissed was that it had been carried out on the direct instructions of Sherpao's own leader Bhutto himself. It is a known fact that before his death Sherpao

had become very disenchanted with the leader he had once hero-worshipped. Bhutto had noticed Sherpao's growing popularity and had come to resent it and had begun politically sidelining him at every available opportunity. Even one of their close PPP colleagues commented:

A few months before his death, [Sherpao] seriously considered leaving the Party altogether. He only changed his mind on the persuasion of myself and other friends from the Frontier ... Of all those around ZAB, Sherpao's personal devotion had been the greatest, and his subsequent disillusionment was consequently the most profound.⁴⁸⁰

Having alienated Sherpao, Bhutto had probably little use left for him. When a campaign of bomb blasts began in the NWFP Bhutto even sent Rafi Raza to Peshawar to accuse the senior minister of masterminding the bombings. It is ironical that the very next day Sherpao met his end in a bomb explosion.⁴⁸¹

The death of Sherpao provided Bhutto with an excuse to clamp down on Wali Khan and his NAP. It was eerily reminiscent of the dismissal of the Balochistan Government on the trumped up charge of being responsible for the arms found in the Iraqi Embassy in February 1973, two years previously. The day following Sherpao's assassination, Wali Khan and all the national and provincial leaders of NAP were either under detention or being urgently sought out by the authorities. The next day it was announced that NAP had been banned and all its assets confiscated. The First Amendment to the 1973 Constitution allowed the Federal Government to ban political parties formed or those 'operating in a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan'.⁴⁸²

On the evening of 10 February I got a call from Jennifer Musa from Balochistan, who had been a NAP MNA, from Islamabad. She told me that over 800 of the NAP party members had been arrested. She also informed me that an Ordinance had been passed in the Assembly which allowed for the arrest of MNAs while the Assembly was in session. Previously, it was not permissible to detain MNAs during a session, nor during a ten-day period prior to and following a session. It had become obvious that the government had begun an intensified assault to destroy all vestiges of the NAP. A brutal campaign had begun to pin Sherpao's death on NAP party members. A number of them, including Asfandiyar, Wali Khan's eldest son, were very brutally tortured in an attempt to extract 'confessions'.⁴⁸³ I was very troubled to learn of Asfandiyar's fate. Earlier, in 1974, he had accompanied his father on one of our trips to Balochistan. I got

⁴⁸⁰ Rafi Raza, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁴⁸² Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1974, (Act XXXIII of 1974) of Pakistan Extraordinary, Part 1 of 8 May 1974, Section 4.

⁴⁸³ Not surprisingly these savage acts of brutality would lead Wali Khan his family to view Bhutto and his PPP with enduring animosity for many years to come.

to know him well, finding him to be a very likeable and upright young man. It certainly seemed as if Bhutto was clearly out to settle scores as vindictively as possible. A few days later the NWFP Governor Aslam Khattak and the Gandapur Government were also sacked and the Federal Government imposed its direct rule in the province.

On 18 February at 1 a.m. I was woken up by a telephone call from a very distraught Mrs. Azizullah Shaikh. Her house was being stoned by hooligans. Her husband had gone into hiding to evade arrest, and she was alone at home with her three young daughters. I took my son Sherazam and a couple of our servants and rushed over to her house within minutes of receiving her call for assistance. Upon reaching there we saw a dozen or so thugs fleeing into the surrounding darkness when they saw our car approach. Inside we discovered Mrs. Shaikh and her three teenage daughters cowering in the corner of a room. The idea that a government could stoop so low as to threaten a defenseless woman and her young daughters sickened me. My son and I kept an all night vigil and left only after the sun emerged. Though a complaint was lodged with the local police station, it seemed of no significance as I suspected there was little the police would do in the circumstances.

All the Opposition parties had unanimously agreed to boycott all further Assembly sessions in protest against the banning of the NAP. In the meanwhile some members of the UDF had made attempts to get Bhutto to adopt a less antagonistic approach towards the banned party. But on 12 March, Professor Ghafoor called on me to say that their talks with Bhutto had been quite unsuccessful. Some days later, on 21 March, I attended a meeting of UDF leaders in Lahore. The mood was one of defiance.

While I was at Lahore, on 22 March, my friend Sadiq Qureshi contacted me requesting a meeting. I met him later that day at my brother, Mir Balakh Sher's house. Sadiq was in a very jovial mood and with good reason. As I noted in my diary: 'Sadiq is chirpy as ever, seems he is becoming the new chief minister'. He was made the chief minister of Punjab, but only after Bhutto had formalized his plans for Punjab some months later.

From Lahore I left for Islamabad. On 25 March, accompanied by Jennifer Musa, I visited Khair Buksh Marri and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo at Sihala - at that time Ataullah Mengal was still at Karachi's cardiovascular hospital undergoing treatment. Jennifer and I stayed and had lunch with the two Baloch leaders. I found both Khair Buksh and Bizenjo in a despondent frame of mind. With the banning of the NAP it was apparent that chances of a political solution on the Balochistan issue had become even more bleak. But the despondency had done little to temper their defiant mood. I noticed that both of them expressed a little disillusionment with Wali Khan and the NWFP members of NAP. It had been nearly twenty months since the Baloch triumvirate had been in jail, and they probably felt that their NAP colleagues had not done enough for the Balochistan cause.

At Islamabad the Opposition leaders held regular meetings about the latest political crisis to engulf us. On 26 March I found myself ill and in bed at the MNA Hostel. Shortly after the doctor left having examined me, Ghulam Faruque Khan came to visit. He informed me that both he and Mufti Mahmood wanted Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the veteran Pathan leader, to hold direct talks with Bhutto in an attempt to normalize the turbulent political situation. I told him that such a meeting would not serve any useful purpose but Ghulam Faruque was adamant and wished to pursue the matter further. That evening I was contacted by Mufti Mahmood who said that he was off to Saudi Arabia with Bhutto to attend Shah Faisal's funeral⁴⁸⁴ and would return the following day to discuss a matter of some importance. The following evening a meeting was held in Mahmood Ali Kasuri's room which was attended by sixteen Opposition members. Later Mufti Mahmood called Professor Ghafoor, Zahoor Ellahi and myself for a separate meeting to discuss the possibility of Ghaffar Khan meeting with Bhutto. I voiced the same opinion that I had earlier to Ghulam Faruque, but added that as the acting leader of the Opposition he was obviously welcome to pursue whatever action he deemed suitable.

The following day, 28 March, I left for Peshawar along with Ghulam Faruque Khan. The next day I attended a lunch given for me by Zubaida, who was married to an old school friend of mine, Aziz Khan Hoti. The lunch was also attended by Zubaida's sister, Naseern Wali Khan, and two of Wali Khan's daughters, Nasreen and Gulale. I had met Begum Wali Khan previously when her husband had invited me for a meal at his place. On this occasion I offered my personal support to the family in their time of extreme persecution. The ladies of the family had suffered immensely. Both Wali Khan and his son Asfandiyar were in jail. Begum Wali's brother Azam - who was married to her step-daughter Nasreen - had escaped to Kabul. The only male member of the family still with them was her son Sangeen, as yet a teenager.

The banning of NAP found the UDF Opposition alliance in a weakened state of unity. Under Pir Pagaro, the alliance lacked a determined leadership. The situation was thrown into an unexpected flux when on 12 May 1975 the government controlled Press announced that Pagaro was stepping down as leader and that I was expected to take over in his place. In Karachi *The Star* carried the story with banner headlines stating 'Sherbaz likely to be elected new chief. The intention of the news story was undoubtedly to create further fissures within the weakening alliance. The item mentioned two other candidates - Nawabza Nasrullah Khan and Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi - but contended that the post of leader would 'go to Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari ... who has kept himself above party politicking'.⁴⁸⁵ The story had no factual base and I immediately issued a denial stating, 'After seeing the sad spectacle of people hankering for leadership and power, I would much rather work in the background quietly and

⁴⁸⁴ King Faisal of Saudi Arabia had been assassinated by a deranged nephew of his on the previous day, 25 March 1975.

⁴⁸⁵ *The Star*, Karachi, 12 May 1975.

without any fanfare'.⁴⁸⁶ In reality both Zahoor Ellahi and I had refused to participate in the elections for president of UDF. Nawabzada Nasrullah remained a contender and canvassed strongly for the position. In the end few members favored Nasrullah Khan's candidature and Pir Pagaro was re-elected largely by default.

Having banned the NAP the government was required under law to refer its dissolution of the party to the Supreme Court. I attended the first day of the hearing on 16 June 1975 at Islamabad. Yahya Bakhtiar the prosecuting attorney launched what seemed to me, a rather mean and vitriolic attack on the NAP leadership accusing it of working against the ideology of Pakistan. The second day of the Reference hearing was scheduled on 19 June, which I also attended. On that day Wali Khan withdrew the power of attorney given to his lawyers. Addressing the bench he demanded the presence in the court of all senior NAP members detained by the government, the right to keep lawyers of their own choice, the replacement of two of the judges who, in his opinion, had openly displayed partiality at the very commencement of the Reference hearing - namely Justices Afzal Cheema and Gul Muhammad Khan - and finally he asked to be let out on bail. The bench only accepted one of his demands. The judges agreed only to allow him to choose his own lawyers. While the court took much pain to distinguish the Reference from a criminal trial, it, nevertheless, did not bother to separate the dissolution of the party from a trial of its leaders - all of whom were imprisoned. Wali Khan, finding this judicial attitude unacceptable to him, opted to withdraw from the case.

The government pressed ahead with its case using everything it could lay its hands on to hurl at the NAP. There was no one left to counter their arguments in the court. In the absence of defence lawyers it was left solely up to the judges to intervene on the validity of the government's argument. Rather than exercise judicial impartiality the court decided to accept the government's evidence and conclusions in full. Soon even newspaper cuttings from the government controlled Press were submitted in evidence as 'proof of NAP's secessionist intentions. As one foreign legal scholar commented: 'The government's case was shaky; frequent references to the issue notwithstanding, its evidence was Radio Kabul interceptions, foreign newspaper clippings and non-contextual excerpts from NAP speeches.'⁴⁸⁷

The judges never bothered to challenge the validity or accuracy of the government's jumbled mix of 'evidence'. Instead they ended up by giving Yahya Bakhtiar and his team a *carte blanche* to produce a mélange of selectively chosen bits and pieces of misinformation: '[The Court] generally accepted the government's case and remained atypically silent concerning tutored and occasionally absent argument. NAP was at

⁴⁸⁶ *Dawn*, Karachi, 15 May 1975.

⁴⁸⁷ Paula R. Newburg, *Judging the State-Courts and Constitutional Politics in Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 153.

once equated with demands for secession and for national expansion.⁴⁸⁸ The decision which was announced four months later, at the end of October 1975, went completely in the government's favor. Exercising a leap in convoluted logic, Chief Justice Hamoodur Rahman had chosen to construe NAP's long held demand for greater provincial autonomy to be nothing more than a claim for a provincial 'right of self-determination with the right to secede'.⁴⁸⁹ The Supreme Court had fallen prey to playing its historical role - since the days of Justice Munir of acceding deferentially, yet again, to - the wishes of the government of the day: 'The sum of [the Supreme Court's] long judgment ... was to endorse the Prime Minister's contempt for political opposition.'⁴⁹⁰ Later the controversial testimony obtained in the Reference would be introduced into the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case under special rules of evidence and be treated as if it were nothing but pure and unvarnished truth. In reality it was a complete travesty of justice.

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The UDF was contemplating whether to directly involve itself in the Reference as a concerned party. On 19 June I went to Sihala to meet Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo to discuss the matter with them. All three commended Wali Khan for refusing to participate in the proceedings and made it clear that they did not wish the UDF to fight the case against the government. Later I conveyed their views to the UDF membership. In the UDF attempts were being made to collect funds for NAP's defence as all its assets had been frozen after the party was banned. For a brief period in July 1975 hopes were lifted. A letter arrived from Sirdar Daoud to Wali Khan in which the Afghan President stated that Bhutto had finally agreed to release all the imprisoned NAP leadership under pressure from USA and Iran. In the end nothing ever came of it.

In the meantime the strained relations between UDF and JUP continued. In July 1975 Maulana Noorani was successfully elected to the Senate. On 29 July I attended a UDF meeting at Lahore. In my diary I noted: 'same old complaints and recriminations'. The petty politicking continued despite the precariousness of the Opposition's position. I raised a firm objection to allowing Opposition members in the provincial assemblies to participate in the proceedings. In my opinion the Opposition boycott of parliamentary proceedings could not just be restricted to the National Assembly. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that the Opposition would continue to boycott all by-elections much to Maulana Noorani's and the JUP's chagrin. By August JUP's criticisms of the UDF had become quite noticeable and it was expected to officially announce its departure from the Opposition alliance. On 23 August I had a lunch for Maulana

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-4.

⁴⁸⁹ From Chief Justice Hamoodur Rahman's judgment in Islamic Republic of Pakistan through Secretary, Ministry of Interior and Kashmir Affairs Islamabad v. Mr. Abdul Wali Khan MNA (Reference No. 1 of 1975) PLD 1975 Supreme Court 463.

⁴⁹⁰ Paula Bewburg, *ibid.*, p. 51.

Noorani to try and heal the rift between JUP and the UDF. Other invitees included Professor Ghafoor and Makhdoom Noor Muhammad, an Independent MNA and friend of mine. From our discussion it became obvious that Noorani was not keen for a settlement. Shortly after their departure I received a call from the Prime Minister's ADC telling me that Bhutto was available to meet me the following day. I could not help but correct the ADC by reminding him that as I had not sought an interview with Bhutto, it was more likely that it was Bhutto who in fact wished to meet with me. And, if such was the case, I would make myself available to meet with him.

Only two days earlier, on 21 August my brother, Mir Balakh Sher had informed me that during a recent meeting with the Prime Minister, Bhutto had spoken very complimentarily about me. According to my brother, Bhutto had told him that he still considered me to be a friend of his and regretted that so far he had been unable to do anything for me. Bhutto informed my brother that he would have liked to have seen me as the Chairman of the Senate or Speaker of the National Assembly. However, by now, it was difficult for me to take anything that Bhutto said too seriously. He had mastered the art of glib speech and whatever he now uttered, I suspected, was largely devoid of any trace of sincerity.

My meeting with Bhutto the following day lasted barely an hour. We discussed mainly three issues: Balochistan, NAP and the Opposition, and Bangladesh. For what it was worth, I told him frankly that a more rational approach to both Balochistan and the Opposition would in the longer term be more beneficial for him as well as the country. His attitude was, as was usually the case, friendly. He gave the distinct impression that he valued my advice, though my recent experience clearly belied that perception. Rather than temper his actions towards Balochistan and the Opposition with moderation, as I had repeatedly advised him over the months, he had ploughed ahead with a policy of unyielding aggression. But as he was the one who had called for the meeting that day, I saw little harm in putting my views across to him yet one more time again. On this occasion, for once, I also took advantage of my meeting with him and directly solicited for his assistance in a matter of much concern to me. A fortnight earlier, my home district of Dera Ghazi Khan had been devastated by floods and over 80,000 people had been rendered homeless. I had no qualms about asking Bhutto for emergency funds for the helpless flood victims. He agreed to look into the matter on an urgent basis and the funds would soon be forthcoming.

Towards the end of September 1975 Khar resigned from the PPP and made moves to join the ranks of the Opposition. Earlier on in mid-March he had been re-appointed Governor of Punjab. After barely two months in office his resignation was reported in the newspapers,⁴⁹¹ but he continued in his post until Bhutto finally sacked him, along with his PPP rival Hanif Ramay who had been the Chief Minister of Punjab - in July

⁴⁹¹ *The Star*, Karachi, 12 May 1975.

1975. Considering my friend Sadiq Qureshi had 'chirpily' been expecting to be made chief minister as early as 22 March that year, it would appear that Bhutto had planned these moves month previously. Outwitted, now Khar wished to be taken into Pagaro's Muslim League and contest a by-election for a Punjab provincial seat from Lahore backed with UDF support. Khar's well-publicized intentions soon led to a crisis within the UDF.

On 13 October I attended a UDF meeting at Lahore. At the meeting it became apparent that a coterie of Punjabi politicians, including Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi, Nawabzada Nasrullah and Malik Qasim, was strongly supporting Khar's candidature. I found it difficult to control my anger and fiercely opposed their stand on this issue. Even if one chose to overlook Khar's contemptible behaviour while in power, the UDF had unanimously decided - with the notable exception of Noorani's JUP - to boycott all future by-elections. Support for Khar in the forthcoming by-elections in Lahore would clearly make a mockery of that decision. I made it clear at the meeting that I would resign if members of the UDF acted in contravention of their own earlier decision.

Less than a week earlier the UDF had refused on principle to support the JUP candidate in a Karachi by-election. Maulana Noorani had made personal appeals to each of us individually to support his candidate Hanif Tayab, who was being opposed by PPP's Justice Noor-ul-Arfin and the Jamaat-i-Islami supported independent candidate, Abdus Sattar Edhi. Noorani was well aware of UDF's stand on participation in by-elections and our negative response to him was made quite public on this occasion. In view of these circumstances, the insistence of some of Punjab's UDF members to circumvent established UDF policy and support Khar was in my view indisciplined and their motives were questionable.

On 16 October Khar held a political rally at Tajpura, Lahore. Ironically for the man who had been instrumental in violently disrupting Opposition meetings, the same fate befell him. A contingent of armed FSF men had been sent to obstruct the meeting. They raised slogans against Khar and tried to create disorder by firing tear-gas shells into the crowd. In the ensuing confusion poisonous snakes were also let loose in the enclosure. Panicked by the snakes and tear-gas, the people fled causing an appalling stampede. Several people were killed and the meeting ended in a fiasco, even before the speeches could begin.⁴⁹²

A few days earlier, during the first week of October, a large number of Khar's toughs and other associates, such as Iftikhar Tari and Muhammad Irshad (both of whom had been provincial ministers during Khar's administration), along with a few dozen others, had been picked up by the authorities and had then suddenly disappeared without

⁴⁹² The next day, Barrister Azizuliah Sheikh was contacted by Akbar Bugti who had been present at Tajpuri in support of Khar. According to Akbar Bugti twenty-seven people had been killed that day. Twenty-four had died in the stampede, and the remaining three by the tear-gas canisters striking them.

trace. Months later it was discovered that they had been imprisoned in a specially constructed concentration camp set up in Dalai, Azad Kashmir. When the international organization, Amnesty International, approached the federal law minister, requesting their release, he denied all knowledge of the detentions. He then advised them that if in fact these people were being detained as alleged, a writ of habeas corpus could not be filed in the High Court as it would pertain to a matter beyond the limits of a Pakistani court's constitutional jurisdiction. Such a writ, he stated, could only be filed at the High Court in Azad Kashmir.⁴⁹³

After my stand at the UDF meeting, a few days later, on 15 October, I was informed that Hafiz Pirzada had telephoned on three occasions in an attempt to contact me. He left a message saying that Bhutto was waiting to speak to me on an urgent matter. I decided to ignore the message and heard no further about it. Three days later my brother, Mir Balakh Sher, telephoned me from Islamabad, shortly after attending a meeting with Bhutto. He told me that the Prime Minister was full of praise for me for 'sticking to my principles' and opposing moves within the UDF to support Khar in the by-election. It would prove to be the only time Bhutto approved of my view on principles.

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On 6 October 1975 while in Multan Kaswar Gardezi the former Secretary-General of NAP, met me. He told me that his party colleagues had decided that in the event the Supreme Court upheld the Government's ban on NAP, a new party would have to be formed to replace it. He said that senior party members had been searching for a new leader to head this proposed political organization. According to him, they had already rejected the likes of Mahmood Ali Kasuri and Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi, and chosen me as a leader of their choice. Not having the slightest intimation of this proposal I was quite taken aback. I told Kaswar that I would have to consult with my colleagues in the Independent Group before giving him a proper answer. Four days later, on 10 October, Majid Mengal dropped in to see me with a message from Attaullah. He told me that the jailed Baloch leader keenly wished that I accept Kaswar Gardezi's proposal in the event the NAP's ban was upheld in the courts.

Towards the end of the month when I reached Islamabad to attend the Assembly - after the Opposition called off its eight and-a-half month boycott of the proceedings - discussions about the possibility of the new party began afresh. I began to consult some of my Opposition colleagues about the proposal. All of them showed enthusiasm for the idea particularly Professor Ghafoor Ahmed whose sincerity and integrity I had come to value. My colleagues in the Independent Group of MNAs all supported me with the exception of Zafar Ahmed Ansari. He told me that it would not be fair on them. My advice to him was that if I did go ahead and form a new party, all that the independent

⁴⁹³ The Government White Paper on Performance of the Bhutto Regime Volume III, 1979, p. 51.

MNAs had to do was to politically disassociate themselves from me, and then follow a course of action which they thought was best for them.

On 30 October 1975 the Supreme Court's verdict on the Reference came out, the Court had, given its disposition, not surprisingly upheld the ban on the NAP. Now the discussions acquired a high degree of earnestness. In my meetings with NAP members - including Kaswar Gardezi, Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, Jennifer Musa and Hashim Gilzai - I made my viewpoint as clear to them as possible. I told them that as an independent MNA I had enjoyed a great deal of liberty and could act freely to suit my conscience. By joining a party - even as its leader - I would be sacrificing my individual political freedom which then would become subordinated to the party's consensual views. Before I could make any commitment, I told them, I would have to discuss the points of policy with all the people who wished to become part of this party and would insist that some references to Islam be inserted. And, if I decided to accept their invitation of leadership, I would not care to be a simple figurehead but be accepted as its factual leader. I asked them to consider these conditions. I was told that there was nothing for them to consider, they were all keen for me to take the responsibility.

On 31 October Mazhar Ali Khan, the prominent left-wing journalist, and Mahmood Ali Kasuri visited me to discuss the formation of the new party. Mazhar appeared keen for me to accept the leadership of the new party, but I sensed a note of wariness in Kasuri. Mazhar had told me that earlier the NAP leadership had approached Khar with the intention of offering the leadership of the proposed party to him. Both of them had turned down the offer. Next they had tried Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi but had met with the same result. None of these Punjabi politicians, according to Mazhar, would risk affiliating themselves with a party which was deeply mistrusted in their province. They all feared that it would mean certain political death for them. I then became the next alternative, a choice Mazhar Ali Khan clearly seemed to approve of Mahmood Ali Kasuri, on the other hand, appeared bitter about NAP. He maintained that despite their 'left-wing pretensions NAP was in essence an insular Pathan party'. He stated that he finally had to leave the party as 'they do not approve of anyone who does not toe their parochial party line'.

The pressure was on me to revive the NAP under a new party. Prominent NAP MNAs, such as Arbab Jehangir and Ghulam Faruque Khan, and MPAs, such as Akram Khan Omerzai and Kulsoom Saifullah, had already deserted the party and joined the PPP. There were fears of further defections. By 3 November I had agreed to head the formation of the new party and a meeting was called for in Islamabad to finalize its programme. A large number of people attended, including Abdul Khaliq Khan (a defecting PPP MNA), Jennifer Musa (MNA), Mahmooda Saleem (MPA), Umrao Khan (MNA), Amirzada Khan (MNA), Ghulam Ahmed Bilour (President, NAP, NWFP), and Naseem Wali Khan. As was common with most progressive parties of those times, we had our small share of the extreme left. At the meeting one or two of these leftists raised

objection to my more moderate approach towards politics as expressed in a recent statement that I had made. Their views were drowned out by the vast majority of those who were assembled there.

On 5 November Bhutto telephoned me in the evening while I was with General Jilani and Naseem Wali Khan. He congratulated me on the formation of the new party and added that in view of our relationship 'surely they could have found another scapegoat'. Reminded by Naseem Wali Khan's presence, I asked Bhutto to allow her to meet her husband whom she had not been allowed to see since his detention. His exchange of pleasantries with me did not extend that far. After prevaricating for a while he agreed though reluctantly.

The next day, on 6 November 1975, the National Democratic Party was officially launched at Islamabad. As I noted in my diary, it was an important day for me. In life one often sets off on a new and uncharted course without really knowing its eventual destination. At that time, all I had was a clear conscience and an abiding faith in God- and that to my mind were enough to venture forth.

CHAPTER 8

PNA and the Fateful 1977 Elections

My first few months after the formation of the NDP were spent organizing the party and rallying our supporters. Apart from regularly travelling to cities such as Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar, now I had to include the smaller provincial cities and towns of our four provinces. My diaries for those days are dotted with meetings at places such as Sukkur, Multan, Mardan, Abottabad, etc. During these initial months the government and its menials, not surprisingly, dogged us every step of the way. Wherever I went there were intelligence people following me around the clock. It seemed as if the new party had already begun to prey upon Bhutto's insecurities.

The NDP's first public meeting was scheduled to be held at Katrak Hall but the venue was closed for us by the government so a new meeting place was found at Baldia Colony. The meeting went off very successfully. It was the first time that Naseem Wali Khan had addressed a public meeting. When her turn came we were all impressed with her powers of oratory. She undoubtedly possessed natural talent and gave a very convincing account of all that had befallen her and her family. It evoked a strong chord of sympathy from the crowd who were still unaccustomed to being addressed by a woman - things they would grow accustomed to eventually with the passage of time. At that meeting little did we realize that her maiden speech was simply a start to her lengthy political career. However, in those days, Naseem Wali Khan was heavily covered with a *chaddur*, and she took much trouble to explain that being a Pathan lady she was only appearing in public because of the compulsion of her circumstances. I recall that she even stated that as soon as her husband was released from jail she would once more withdraw to the sanctity of the *zanannah*. But then politics, to be fair to the lady, is nothing if not addictive.

On our return from Baldia Colony we found our route blockaded by the police. A number of us managed to break through the police blockades but Senator Hashim Gilzai (the leader of the Opposition in the Senate), who had been appointed NDP's Convenor for Balochistan was arrested and charged for disobeying Section 144 which had been imposed in the area prior to our visit. This harassment would continue. By the end of 1975, within eight weeks of NDP's formation, twenty-eight of its members would be under arrest.

On 15 November, an all-Pakistan NDP convention was held at my house at Karachi. People gathered from all provinces to participate in it. Upon formation of the NDP, I had been appointed the party's Convenor. It was now my task to assemble all its

leading members and chalk out a programme for the party. Committed as I was to the principles of democracy, I was keen to ensure that - at this initial stage before appointment of party officials - all aspects of party policy were open for discussion and deliberation and decisions were only made by consensus. I was much heartened by the public reaction we had received so far. It was becoming apparent that we were receiving an extremely favorable response from different areas of Pakistan. Less than a month after the creation of NDP a political commentator noted:

The swift emergence of National Democratic Party of Sirdar Sherbaz Mazari on the political scene might be causing concern to the ruling party. The animated response to Sirdar Sherbaz Mazari and Begum Wali Khan, particularly from the students and teachers of Karachi University as well as the Baluch and Pukhtun sections of Karachi's teeming population? is being taken note of by the high command of the People's Party. According to one National Assembly member, the Muslim League might find a ready response in the Punjab, but in Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier, it might well be Sirdar Sherbaz Mazari's party which might make headway - if party politics is permitted to go unhampered.

... according to some [MNAs] from Sindh, the Baluch biradari is singularly conscious of its preponderance both in the Province of Sind as well as the National Assembly. It might come as a surprise to many, but Sirdar Mazari and his National Democratic Party might find a response in Bahawalpur, parts of Multan, and Dera Ghazi Khan district, members [of the Assembly] say.⁴⁹⁴

In the meantime yet another government-Opposition crisis had taken place. While I was attending the NDP convention at Karachi, on 14 November the Opposition created an uproar in the Assembly over the government's introduction of the proposed Fourth Amendment to the 1973 Constitution. Under the Amendment the government planned to further curtail the writ jurisdiction of the High Courts in cases of preventive detention. It thwarted the courts' ability to prohibit such detentions or even grant bail to people so detained. It was clearly directed towards disabling the courts from intervening in cases of blatant political victimization. In the ensuing parliamentary commotion the sergeant-at-arms was ordered to evict the Opposition MNAs from the chamber. When the officers of the legislative body found themselves unable to comply with the instructions, FSF troopers were called in. These government hired ruffians bodily lifted eight struggling Opposition MNAs and dumped them unceremoniously in the National Assembly car park. Among the victims was the acting Leader of the Opposition, Mufti Mahmood. It was a scandalous display of unwarranted aggression and only helped in furthering the growing bitter divide between members of the Opposition and Bhutto.

⁴⁹⁴ Anis Mirza, 'Ringling Bells and talk of elections', *Viewpoint*, 5 December 1975.

The imminent introduction of the Fourth Amendment soon galvanized the Opposition into trying to paper over their existing differences in an attempt at presenting a public display of solidarity. As I had participated in the UDF as leader of the Independent Group, my association with the Opposition alliance had effectively terminated with the creation of the NDP. While I was busy with the NDP convention, the UDF leaders had announced another boycott of the National Assembly proceedings. They then met in Islamabad to discuss how to deal with the government's intention to force the constitutional amendment through without allowing for any debate.

An interesting aspect of the PPP regime period can be gleaned from a secret intelligence report sent to Bhutto by his personal security chief, Abdul Hamid Bajwa about the UDF's deliberations on the Fourth Amendment. This report, of course, was revealed to the public only after Bhutto's fall.

There were differences of opinion, about the future line of action, in the UDF. Majority were in favor of resigning their seats, from the Assemblies and then go out and work. The Parliamentary Party was not in favor of putting resignations, except Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi.

(Alongside this paragraph Bhutto wrote in his own hand: 'This majority should be broken'.)

They decided to enlist the sympathies of Jamaat-i-Islami and Sherbaz Mazari Group also. Zahoor Ellahi thought that they will be able to persuade [Tehrik-i-Istiqlal] also to cooperate with them.

(Alongside this paragraph Bhutto wrote separately: 'Please work on Sherbaz Mazari' and 'Please work on Mufti'.)

They could not, finally, decide till late evening last night, (they are again meeting today and according to an unconfirmed report have formed a sub-committee, consisting of Mufti Mahmood, Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi, Professor Ghafoor Ahmed and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan to approach all the parties, even outside UDF and put up proposals within ten days).

At the end of the typed report Bhutto wrote further instructions: 'Please become very active before the 10 days lapse'. This was followed by his signature and a reference that his annotated instructions be sent to the Director of the Intelligence Bureau.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁵ From a copy of a secret note from Abdul Hamid Bajwa, Officer on Special Duty for Chief Security Officer, to Bhutto, dated 18 November 1975: *The Government White Paper on Performance of the Bhutto Regime*, Volume III, 1979, Annexure 13, p. A-51.

Two salient facts can be established from the above document. Firstly, that the government was getting very accurate reports on all the goings on of the Opposition parties. And, second, that most of these Opposition parties (the NDP included) had its own collection of the ruling party's 'moles'. The jobs of these 'moles' varied. Some just provided details of Opposition meetings and their deliberations, others had a more sinister role to play. They in fact were agent provocateurs bent on creating disunity within the Opposition movement, as well as within the individual parties they belonged to. In the absence of adequate proof it would be unfair of me to provide any names, but most genuine Opposition members of that period believed that underhand machinations were at play and each had their own list of suspects.

After having been forcibly ejected from parliament Mufti Mahmood, the acting Leader of the Opposition, refused Bhutto's offer of a dialogue to sort matters out. This offer of a dialogue was a typical Bhutto gesture. He would now hold himself out as a man of reason offering to settle the dispute in a calm and sensible manner - completely ignoring the fact that it was he who had shoved the repressive Fourth Amendment down the throats of the Opposition MNAs, as well as had them manhandled and ejected from the Assembly chamber. When his 'judicious' offer would meet with rejection, he would get the theatrical opportunity of twisting his hands in dismay and then announce that as he was faced by such an 'obstructive and hostile' Opposition, that he had little choice but to 'crush them' for the sake of good governance.

After a brief and hectic tour of the NWFP - which culminated in a mammoth public meeting at Chowk Yaadgar in Peshawar, along with Naseem Wali Khan and other senior NDP party members, travelled to Lahore to attend the Convention of Opposition Parties which was held in the first week of December.⁴⁹⁶ The idea behind the Convention was to get the Opposition parties to make a unified decision about our future dealings with the government. The four-day Convention was best summed up by a cynical yet accurate columnist who said:

For four days the leaders of the country's main Opposition parties were engaged in endless confabulations. They held dinner meetings and lunch sessions; and there was one day of fiery speeches, followed by the inevitable Press conference. They went through the ritual of asking the PPP government to resign, and make way for a national government and early general elections. Then having unburdened themselves, Asghar Khan and the JUP bandwagon went off to fight the Karachi by-election; the representatives of the newly-formed NDP circumspectly observed the scene of disarray [my emphasis]; and the UDF, with

⁴⁹⁶ Other NDP representatives included Ghulam Ahmed Bilor, Hashim Gilzai, Mehmooda Salim, Ali Buksh Talpur and a number of others.

the Pagaro Muslim League in the lead, declared with a flourish that December 19 would be observed as a Black Day.⁴⁹⁷

Having been a witness to UDF's petty internal politicking and squabbles ever since its inception - over a period of thirty-two months - I was convinced that the NDP was better without the UDF rather than within and as a consequence the NDP had stayed out of the Opposition alliance. At the Opposition Convention, Noorani once again demanded UDF support for his JUP candidate in yet another Karachi by-election. This time he had extra support in the form of Asghar Khan, who had originally refused to participate in the UDF at its inception. A number of us tried to persuade both of them not to insist on this issue, as it would only weaken the semblance of Opposition unity. Unfortunately, both Noorani and Asghar refused to yield to the majority view, which clearly called for the boycott of all by-elections. But, as I was no longer a part of the UDF leadership, I managed to keep out of the resulting fray.

19 December 1975 had been nominated a 'Black Flag Day' of protest against the government policies. Two days earlier, on 17 December, Asghar Khan visited me with an invitation on behalf of the joint Opposition to join them in addressing a rally at Karachi's Katrak Hall on the scheduled day of protest. After consulting my colleagues I agreed to attend.

On the morning of the 19 December, we were informed that the FSF and armed police had taken charge of all the routes leading to Katrak Hall, an area adjacent to the well-known Empress Market. Asghar Khan, Maulana Noorani and I were forced to disembark from our vehicles near Empress Market as the police had blockaded the road. A crowd of several thousand had already assembled there. We forced our way through the blockade on foot, as the sheer number of the crowd - which had become very enthusiastic upon our arriving on the scene - was too daunting for the police to handle. We walked a few hundred yards down the main road before turning right into the long alley which led to the Hall. When the three of us entered the gates at the end of the alley, a large body of police made their sudden appearance. A DSP quickly took the three of us into custody as the rest of the police contingent charged the crowd following us in the alley, with their steel-tipped *lathis*. The narrowness of the alley had made their task all that much easier as the police had only to contend with those in the front. As those in the front fell to the blows of the police, others fled towards the rear, creating panic. Later I was informed they brutally cleared the alley all the way to the main road. After a while besides the police, only my three sons - Sherazam, Shehryar and Sher Afzal, Mir Ali Buksh Talpur and my driver remained in the alley as they had refused to budge until they discovered what had happened to me. Later the police charged them as well. As a result of this later lathi attack, Ali Buksh Talpur's wrist was broken and my three sons carried with them their share of cuts, welts and bruises for the next few days.

⁴⁹⁷ Linesman, 'Between the Lines', *Viewpoint*, 12 December 1975.

Asghar Khan, Noorani and I were taken to the Soldier Bazaar police station and detained there. After a while an angry crowd swelled outside and the police decided to release us before the situation got out of hand. All over Pakistan similar rallies had been disrupted by the local police and FSF. Having muzzled the Press and despite having achieved near complete control of all media, Bhutto's government was determined not to allow the Opposition any opportunity of communicating with the public in any form whatsoever. The government's open and adversely hostile attitude towards the Opposition was now even impelling the less belligerent Opposition parties into adopting a firmer stance. The case for a genuinely unified Opposition bloc was becoming stronger. Conflicting political viewpoints within the Opposition over issues such as provincial autonomy, regional nationalism, and diverging religious outlooks would soon be ignored. In the end the only remaining obstacle we would face in unifying the Opposition would be caused by the egos of some of the leaders involved.

On 30 December NDP held a public meeting at Pathan Colony at Karachi. It was attended by a large crowd. The NDP was the first political party to begin holding these types of public meetings. At this meeting we launched an anti-Bhutto campaign. The reason the campaign was directed towards Bhutto was simple: we realized that we were faced with a civilian despot. Most of Bhutto's cabinet ministers quivered in their shoes for fear of incurring their master's wrath. It seemed inappropriate to accord them the distinction of having any say in the government, other than - to act under his instructions and as his minions. Total power had been wrested by Bhutto. All others in his government were of little consequence.

After the formation of NDP a large part of my time was spent in arranging the party into an organized political force in the shortest of time possible. Organizing a political party based upon democratic principles - as opposed to personality cult movement - takes a great deal of time, patience and effort. I consulted all the leading members of the NDP to establish a consensus on such important aspects as the party's constitution and its manifesto. Both of these were to be finalized at the NDP's convention scheduled for April 1976.

The peculiarity of our political culture also presented us with some unforeseen consequences. In early 1976 Altaf Qureshi, the editor of the Urdu Digest, and his brother Ejaz, met me during one of my visits to Lahore and suggested that I appoint S. M. Zafar - who once had served in Ayub Khan's cabinet - as the Secretary-General of NDP. Though I had my personal reservations about Zafar, because of his close links with Ayub Khan's regime, I suggested that if he felt strongly for the NDP he should join the party. Then it would be up to the other party members to elect him to the office of party secretary-general, if they so wished. Apparently that was not the answer S. M. Zafar was seeking. Altaf Qureshi made it quite clear to me that S. M. Zafar 'must be made the secretary-general and he expects you to go to his office and discuss the terms of his joining the NDP'. Needless to add, S. M. Zafar never joined the NDP and I never

went to meet him at his office. Eventually he would join Jatoi's National People's Party (NPP) as a vice-president.

A while later, Altaf and Ejaz Qureshi came once again to persuade me to appoint someone else as NDP's secretary-general. This time it was Rafique Ahmed Bajwa, who was keen to enter politics. I even accepted an invitation to lunch at Bajwa's place. During our meeting I found him to be very articulate in speech and extremely ambitious. I imagine he might have been disappointed by my reply. I suggested to him that the only course open to him - if he wished to be appointed secretary-general - to join the party and then stand for office during the party's convention. Clearly my answer was not acceptable to him as he soon joined Noorani's JUP as a party vice-president.

Another person who was eager to join the NDP was General A. A. K. Niazi. He even called on me and keenly expressed this desire in person. I was adamant in my refusal. Like many people I held Niazi responsible for the atrocities and eventual disaster in East Pakistan. It was also difficult to forget his grandiose bragging which was followed by his humiliation and our days of shame. Sadly, the following year, during the PNA movement in 1977, Niazi was asked to participate in some of the rallies held in Karachi as one of the chief speakers. This episode was, to my mind, a damning indictment on the morality of our political parties. This predatory instinct to overlook principles in favour of obtaining the slightest of political advantage, renders most politicians largely devoid of any sincerity of purpose. Whether they be in government or opposition, the aspiration for power is all that seems to matter to most Pakistani politicians.

* * *

On 6 February 1976 tragedy struck. Asadullah, the twenty-year old son of Attaullah Mengal was gunned down outside my brother Mir Balakh Sher's house at Karachi, along with his friend Ahmed Shah Kurd. Ironically, they had both been to see me just the day before.

I later learnt that Asadullah, who was constantly being followed by local intelligence agencies, sought to evade them, earlier that day, by swapping cars at a friend's house. In the friend's car he, accompanied by Ahmed Shah, arrived at my brother's house in Karachi's Muhammad Ali Housing Society a few minutes before 8 p.m. He informed the servant present at the house that he was expecting to receive a telephone call there. At about 8 p.m. as the telephone rang, the servant heard loud bursts of gunfire. When he went out of the gate, under the light of the street lamp he saw Asadullah's car crashed against the wall and a number of armed people surrounding it. It was then that he noticed that both ends of the street had been blocked by black vehicles. He witnessed the men then carrying two prone bodies from the crashed car to one of their vehicles before driving away. The abandoned car was badly scarred by bullets. There was blood

on the car seats. It was clear that either one or both the boys had suffered grievous injuries.

One can surmise that at some stage Asadullah Mengal or his companion had noticed that the street had been blocked at both ends. Alerted they must have then tried to make a getaway. In their attempt to escape they attracted the gunfire which led them to crash the car into the wall. Their assailants then carried both of them and departed without leaving any trace.

Though I was at Lahore, I learnt of this commando-style attack within minutes of it taking place, as it happened outside my brother's house. My initial shock at this horrible event quickly changed to sorrow when my thoughts turned towards Attaullah Mengal. I could only imagine what grief this would cause him. Days went past without any news of the missing boys. In the absence of hard facts rumors began to circulate. Some supposedly knowledgeable people in senior positions in Balochistan hinted that Asadullah had only suffered minor injuries and had been incarcerated in a hospital in a northern city, while his friend Ahmed Shah had died in the encounter. Other sources later suggested that Asadullah had recovered completely and had been sent to jail. Almost a month after the incident new and more ominous rumors began to circulate. These rumors suggested that Asadullah had been critically wounded in the shooting. Instead of being taken to a hospital, he was taken to Malir where he was tortured to extract information about his dealings in Balochistan. He was said to have died during torture and his body was then said to have been quickly and secretly disposed off to prevent any trail of evidence leading to the perpetrators.

By now, I realized that, it seemed likely that poor Asad was dead. I felt terribly for the sufferings his parents had to undergo. Attaullah, being a traditional Baloch to the core, would never make his grief public, but I could only imagine the pain and anguish he suffered as a father. In jail he had no one nearby to even try and console him. These were terrible times. I filed a writ of habeas corpus at the Karachi High Court, but there was no response. To this very day no one, apart from the perpetrators themselves, knows the whereabouts of Asadullah's remains. It was a truly tragic end to the life of a lad I had known since his childhood days.

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At this stage its worth digressing to mention an event which would eventually have enormous repercussions on Pakistan's future history. On 29 February 1976, Bhutto appointed General Ziaul Haq as Chief of Army Staff, who in getting the post, superseded seven generals senior to him. In selecting Zia, Bhutto would once more belie his oft-quoted claim to political mastery and genius. Instead, he had fallen victim to his own penchant for flattery and sycophancy.

Bhutto, it seems, first came into contact with Zia in 1973. Zia was then the presiding officer in the 1973 Conspiracy trial involving young officers who were accused of plotting to overthrow the government. According to General K. M. Arif, during the length of the trial Zia reported to Bhutto on a daily basis and his manner seemed to have pleased the Prime Minister.

Zia made a further effort to ingratiate himself to Bhutto. Soon after the trial he invited Bhutto to become the honorary Colonel-in-Chief of the Armoured Corps. When he became Corps Commander of the Multan sector...

Zia maintained his rapport with Mr Bhutto and paid his respects to the latter whenever he visited Multan. During such visits, Mr Bhutto stayed at the 'White House', the residence of Governor Sadiq Hussain Qureshi. Zia used to be a favorite topic at the 'White House'. Bhutto was indeed charmed by him during his visit to the Multan garrison. The Prime Minister was given a rousing ovation by a turn-out of the wives and children of officers at the station, who showered flower petals on the visiting dignitary.⁴⁹⁸

At the time of Bhutto's visit to the Multan garrison, it came to my knowledge that a number of junior officers had protested to Zia about his orders calling for their wives to be present on the occasion. They objected on the grounds that Bhutto was a well-known womanizer and it was inappropriate to put their wives on 'display' before him. Zia, who would later proclaim himself to be a great 'Islamist', rejected their appeals and insisted that the women be present. Such obliging behavior could only have further endeared him to Bhutto.

Bhutto held those who constantly bowed before his will in contempt. His attempt to imitate Hitler's success at suborning the army command to his will would soon come apart when it came to dealing with his own generals. He overreached himself by the delusion that 'if a small [Austrian] could master the Prussian Army, what could prevent [Zulfikar Ali Bhutto] from doing the same with the Punjabi Army'.⁴⁹⁹ Bhutto did not prove to be the 'political giant' he credited himself to be.

* * *

At the end of April 1976 the national convention of the NDP took place at Peshawar. Under Bhutto's directives the local authorities prevented us from holding our meetings in Peshawar city. We were therefore forced to hold the convention in the *hujrah* - the male segregated section of a Pathan house - of Arbab Saifur Rehman, a few miles out of Peshawar. Three hundred and seventy-three delegates turned up from all the four

⁴⁹⁸ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1995, p. 45.

⁴⁹⁹ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan, 1967-1977*, op. cit., p.

provinces for the Convention, and in addition there were over five hundred people who had come as observers. On the first day a small group of self-proclaimed leftists created some agitation by trying to interrupt proceedings and putting across their extremist demands. Despite their attempts, the party constitution and manifesto were passed by an overwhelming majority of those present. I was then elected as party president in accordance with the terms of the new constitution. The following and final day of the convention, there was no further trouble as the communists had decamped the previous evening. The mood of the meeting was mixed with anger as Nawaz Butt had held a press conference in which he made some rather wild allegations while bitterly criticizing us. The following day, 1 May 1976, after leading a large procession through Peshawar's Kissakhwani Bazaar we held a large political rally at Chowk Yaadgar. It went off very successfully and was a suitable culmination to the party convention.

A few days later, on 9 May, an NDP meeting for party workers was held at my residence at Karachi. After the meeting Naseem Wali raised the new party flag on the roof of my house. The flag had been designed by her daughter Gulale, who was then a medical student studying at Peshawar. The material for the flag had been purchased by Gulale herself. Her mother had helped stitch it. Despite the earlier objections of the leftists - who had demanded that the flag be totally red - now in addition to the red, it had a green triangle on the left where it touched the pole. There was a large white star on a red base at the right. The green represented Pakistan and the white represented our minorities, who all too often had been much ignored.

The following day I went to Hyderabad to attend the conspiracy trial against Wali Khan, the three Baloch leaders and a number of senior NAP members. I was accompanied by Naseem Wali Khan and a large number of NDP party men. Only a few of us were allowed into the jail precincts where the trial was being held. We met with Wali Khan, Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo, Arbab Sikandar Khalil and the others who were imprisoned there for the duration of the trial. In the Hyderabad Conspiracy case the government had charged the defendants with a 'conspiracy to disintegrate Pakistan' and a special court had been empanelled to conduct the case in Hyderabad Central Jail. Government intelligence agencies had been given the task of collecting evidence against the accused. This evidence was supplemented by the Supreme Court's ruling in the earlier Reference Case. The government defended the Conspiracy case by claiming that it was a necessary successor to the Reference Case. It argued that:

...as the National Awami Party and its leaders had walked out of the Supreme Court during the hearing of the case about the dissolution of this party, therefore it was considered necessary that these leaders and other accused may have

proper opportunity to rebut evidence that may be brought before the Special Court in support of the finding given by the Supreme Court.⁵⁰⁰

The government's argument was blatantly mendacious. A writer commenting upon it said: The absence of due process guarantees - under special rules of evidence, the government could add charges any time before the judgment was pronounced - cast a long shadow on the government's allusion that the court was convened for the benefit of the defendants.⁵⁰¹ The Hyderabad Conspiracy Case was nothing but another example of flagrant political victimization. And sadly once more, our judiciary fell completely in line with the wishes of the government of the day. By the time the Special Court convened in Hyderabad more Opposition politicians were added to the existing list of forty-four defendants. Among them there were Opposition members who had absolutely no connection with the banned NAP.⁵⁰² I attended the trial regularly. It was all I could do to provide moral support to my friends in the dock. What absolutely appalled me was that at the trial all the defendants were made to sit behind bars, as if they were dangerous criminals. The judges did not even bother to give a semblance of justice during the course of the trial - at least not until Bhutto was overthrown in July 1977. Then, remarkably they began to display a new found conscience. In August 1977 the Hyderabad Court even ventured to criticize the government by holding the editor and publisher of the government-owned *Pakistan Times* for publishing an editorial on the outcome of the Hyderabad tribunal and claiming that those who advocated Wali Khan's release were unpatriotic. Naturally, the sycophantic editorial had been written before the Army coup against Bhutto and the Court's contempt verdict against it was delivered only after the coup had successfully taken place. It was indeed a pathetic reflection on the quality of two of the five fundamental pillars of the State - the Press and the Judiciary.

The continuation of the state of emergency and the emergency laws - such the Defence of Pakistan Rules (DPR) - was a similar exercise in perpetuating an authoritarian state of rule. I questioned these policies on several occasions in the Assembly. Article 232 of the Constitution clearly stated 'that the proclamation of emergency can be issued only, either if the country is threatened by war or external aggression or by internal disturbances beyond the control of the government'. After the loss of East Pakistan and the war with India, one could have envisaged its applicability, but by this time diplomatic and trade ties had resumed with India. Our relations with bordering Afghanistan had also normalized. I stressed these points quite vocally but to no avail. Bhutto was not prepared to yield his draconian DPR powers which could be used at will to defend his political interests.

⁵⁰⁰ Excerpt from a letter, dated 19 August 1976, sent by Yahya Bakhtiar, the Attorney-General to Amnesty International. Cited in *Islamic Republic of Pakistan: An Amnesty International Report*, London, 1977.

⁵⁰¹ Paula R. Newburg, *Judging the State*, op. cit., p. 156.

⁵⁰² On 10 June 1976 Ali Buksh Talpur MNA, a leading member of NDP was among those charged belatedly in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case.

In July 1976 he extended the DPR even further by an amending Ordinance. This new amendment gave the special tribunals exclusive jurisdiction over offences under Defence of Pakistan Rules. Their jurisdiction was now made final. A special tribunal decision did not allow for any reviews or appeals in any other court. It was obvious to me that this amending Ordinance was made with the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case in mind. On 6 July 1976 the Assembly was purposely adjourned to facilitate the proclamation of this Ordinance. If it had been passed as a Bill in the Assembly it would have been debated. Despite the PPP's overwhelming presence in the Assembly, Bhutto was wary of the tiny Opposition. We used the chamber as vocally as possible in an attempt to expose what we felt were the government's mean designs.

Notwithstanding the acquiescence of a large number among the judiciary, Bhutto still mistrusted them. To further bring all senior judges into check the government proposed introducing another amendment to the 1973 Constitution. Under this amendment, for the first time, the judges were themselves directly affected. The term of the office of the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court and the Provincial High Courts was to be determined not only by age but now by a fixed period as well. Its aim was clearly to alter the composition of the judges over a period of time. The Amendment also gave the government power to transfer a judge from one High Court to another for a period of one year, for which consent was not necessary. No reason needed to be given for the transfer nor was any consultation required. This power of instantly transferring a High Court judge was a weapon of coercion Bhutto intended to use against recalcitrant judges who chose to ignore his dictates.

I made several scathing attacks on the government's latest moves. At Abbottabad while addressing the local Bar Council I ended my speech by saying: 'All these measures only amount to an expression of no confidence in the superior courts and reflect the anxiety of the government to deprive them of all their effective power in matters involving the liberties of citizens.' On 2 September I issued a press statement which was subsequently printed in one or two of the remaining independent newspapers which still had the courage to publish it. In it I said: 'The whole Amendment Bill is perhaps the most repressive and blatant attack on the liberty and rights of the citizens. The powers of the judiciary have been drastically whittled down and whatever little confidence there is left in the judiciary will now be completely destroyed.' In any event when the Amendment was brought before the Assembly the Opposition walked out in protest. Needless to say, in our absence it was passed unanimously.

The dilution of the fundamental clauses of the 1973 Constitution were an anathema to me. I made sure that the NDP take a strong stand on this issue. A party statement issued that year summarized my feelings.

Our party will not rest until and when we are able to restore the 1973 Constitution without the anti-democratic and anti-people amendments. To us democracy, rule of law, an independent judiciary, complete civil liberties and human rights should be ensured as by the UN charter. Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, a free Press, decency and humanity in our society should be the right of every free-thinking Pakistani. And along with this, economic rehabilitation and social justice free from discrimination based upon caste, creed, faith, religion, profession, colour, sex or origin should be the goal of our country.⁵⁰³

Increasingly, NDP organizational activities had begun to take a large part of my time. I had decided to personally organize the NDP affairs in Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab. The NWFP I left to Naseem Wali Khan and other supporters of Wali Khan as it only seemed fair that they should be given a free hand to do so. I had to find suitable leadership for NDP Balochistan. On the advice of my Baloch friends in jail I flew to Quetta to meet with Agha Abdul Karim, the late Khan's brother. I was surprised to discover that he was staying at a government-owned rest house near the Balochistan University. I rather unexpectedly found him to be quite uncooperative. He spoke disparagingly of Bizenjo, the very man who had recommended Agha Abdul Karim's appointment as provincial head of the NDP in the first place. I recall he said, 'Who is Bizenjo? He was only my secretary not so long ago!' I could not allow his remark to go unchallenged. I reminded him that Bizenjo had been the general-secretary of Ustman Gal - the Baloch nationalist party headed by Agha Abdul Karim - and not his personal secretary as his comment suggested. Finding his attitude unaccommodating I politely told him that my visit had been solely prompted by the suggestion of the jailed Baloch leaders and perhaps he should visit them at the Hyderabad Central jail and discuss it with them.

The name that Attaullah Mengal had proposed to me was that of Gul Khan Naseer. Gul Khan had been an ardent Baloch nationalist and was the much acclaimed rebel poet of Balochistan. I was unable to meet with him as he was in Mach jail. I had to send a representative to discuss with him the possibilities of his taking the mantle of party provincial leadership. To my great disappointment Gul Khan rejected the offer and pronounced that the NDP should never have been formed in the first place. He maintained that the only way out was to negotiate directly with Bhutto and reach some form of agreement. Little did I know then that Gul Khan Naseer's rebellious spirit had been tamed by Bhutto's attempts to accommodate him. Later records would reveal that as early as August 1974 Bhutto had written to Jam Ghulam Qadir, the Balochistan Chief Minister, telling him to adopt a conciliatory approach with Gul Khan. In the letter Bhutto had said, 'I think it would be advisable to utilize the change in Gul Khan

⁵⁰³ While this was published over twenty-two years ago I still ardently subscribe to this same idealist vision.

Naseer's attitude for achieving our objective of solving the Baluchistan problem'.⁵⁰⁴ A fortnight earlier Bhutto had sought his private secretary, Afzal Said Khan's advice. The PM's secretary had replied:

... we may release Gul Khan Naseer on bail. He should meet other NAP leaders in jail and try and bring them round. Gul Khan Naseer may, however be told that in case the other three NAP leaders do not see eye-to-eye with him, he would have to go it alone with the help of other NAP leaders and members of Assembly. My feeling is that he would succeed in bringing about final political settlement. If he genuinely works for it, he may be allowed to retain his seat in the Provincial Assembly.⁵⁰⁵

While Bhutto's plan never came to fruition, it was clear that Gul Khan Naseer's heart was no longer in the cause he had for so long espoused.

Finally I contacted Mahmood Aziz Khurd, who had been Bizenjo's choice for party general-secretary and offered him the party's provincial leadership. He accepted the post without a sign of hesitation. Then I approached Amir-ul-Mulk Mengal,⁵⁰⁶ who agreed to become provincial NDP secretary-general. It must be recalled that during those days of government oppression even some of the self-professed men of courage hesitated to take prominent Opposition roles against the might of the government. In the testing days that followed I found both of them to be men of quality. In time I learnt to admire them for their integrity and dedication to our political cause.

In Sindh the rebel PPP MNA Mir Ali Buksh Talpur had joined the NDP and had been appointed as provincial Convenor of the NDP. Unfortunately Mir Ali Buksh was heavily influenced by self-styled Sindhi nationalists like Rasool Buksh Palejo. I found him and some of the other Sindhi nationalists very rigid in their attitude towards the Urdu-speakers present in the province. They soon began showing a marked preference for only those whose mother tongue was Sindhi into the party. More problems were soon created when Talpur took it upon himself to appoint M. M. Pirzada as Convenor of NDP Karachi and Amir Haider Kazmi general-secretary of NDP Karachi - all this without consulting anyone. Problems such as these would continue to crop up in Sindh and I would then have to persuade people to adopt a more moderate and consensual approach. The Urdu-speaking community were as much part of Pakistan as any of us, and I was keen to see that more members from their community join NDP. Much to my satisfaction, they did.

⁵⁰⁴ From a copy of the official 'Top Secret /Eyes Only' letter from Bhutto to Jam Ghulam Qadir, Chief Minister, dated 17 August 1974: *The Government White Paper on Performance of the Bhutto Regime*, Volum in, Misuse of the Instruments of State Power, 1979, Annexure 1, p. A-4.

⁵⁰⁵ From a copy of a secret memo from Afzal Said Khan, Secretary to Bhutto, dated 12 August 1974: *ibid.*, Annexure 1, p. A-2.

⁵⁰⁶ Amir-ul Mulk Mengal later became Chief Justice of Balochistan.

In Punjab the poet, Habib Jalib was aspiring to become the provincial Convenor of the party. Unfortunately, a group of party members, led by Kaswar Gardezi and Rao Mehroz Akhtar, actively opposed him. Much as I admired Habib Jalib, as I was bound to my commitment of following a consensual approach, I was saddened to see him fail. He had always been a man of firm convictions and resolute courage, and in my book, an asset to the party. I was fast learning that even the political men of principle found it difficult to forego their own ambitions for the greater good of the party.

Despite the many obstacles one faces in setting up a new party, the NDP was soon shaping into a vigorous political force. This had already become apparent to the government and steps were being taken to prevent us from succeeding. As early as May 1976 Rao Rashid Khan, a policeman who had been appointed as a Special Secretary and head of the National Intelligence Board, had submitted a top secret note to Bhutto suggesting various 'lines of action' against the Opposition.

Preventing the NDP from coming in the fold of the Opposition. This can be achieved by attacking their secessionist manifesto. An immediate attack can be launched on the similarity of their programme with Mujib's six point programme, their plan to reopen the fundamentals of the Constitution in proposing redefining of the boundaries of the Provinces and encouraging local cultures and languages. If this attack is launched immediately, without waiting for a detailed study of their manifesto [my emphasis], it will scare the JUI, the Muslim League and Punjab generally, from accepting the NDP in their fold.⁵⁰⁷

Rao Rashid's suggestion was agreed upon by Bhutto who annotated the note to that effect, 'Yes, may try. [NDP] coming into UDF also carries some advantages. Keep them out if you can...'. The note was dated 18 May 1976. It is worth noting that the NDP Manifesto had only been adopted a little over a fortnight earlier. The regime did not wish to waste time.

In a short time an eleven-page document was prepared by the Prime Minister's Secretariat. Headed 'NDP's Manifesto - A Critical Appreciation', it was distributed widely among the Press and people perceived as being influential. It was glaringly obvious that the writers of the document had obediently followed Rao Rashid's dictum of not bothering to make a 'detailed study' of the NDP Manifesto. It was full of half-baked assertions and innuendoes, and short on hard facts. At times it was puerile and patently ludicrous.

⁵⁰⁷ From a copy of a secret note from Rao Rashid Khan, Special Secret PM Bhutto, dated 18 May 1976: *ibid.*, p. A-10.

First of all one should analyze their flag. It is a red flag - a red flag with a five pointed star in the centre. So far there is no ambiguity. Then there is a green equilateral [sic] triangle on the left side. What does this triangle stand for? Is it for the Holy Trinity? The father, the son and the Holy Ghost! But Pakistan is a Muslim country. It cannot show the Holy Trinity. It does not symbolize the provinces of Pakistan because there are four provinces in Pakistan. Which one they want [sic] to exclude? Or does it stand for their foreign friends from whom they derive all their inspiration.⁵⁰⁸

His years in the police force had certainly given Rao Rashid a very colorful imagination. As I have mentioned earlier, the flag had been designed by young Gulale Wali Khan. She showed it to me and I, along with other members of the NDP - with the exception of the communists who soon left the party - approved of her contribution wholeheartedly.

The clear intention of this document was to label us as 'secessionists'. The NDP did advocate the development of Pakistan 'as a Federal State with a Parliamentary Government, on the basis of complete provincial autonomy. Defence, currency, foreign affairs and communications were the only portfolios to remain with the Federal Government'.⁵⁰⁹ Now, with the lapse of fifty years since independence, one could quite reasonably contend that if provincial autonomy had been allowed in Pakistan in the earlier days, the country would possibly have been much better off, and at the very least East Bengal would most likely have remained a part of the country.⁵¹⁰ Anyway, Rao Rashid's ham-fisted attempt to malign the party in this manner did not succeed in alienating the NDP from other parties in the Opposition.

My last meeting with Bhutto took place on 4 June 1976. Sirdar Shaukat Hayat met me as I was leaving the Assembly building and insisted that I accompany him to the Prime Minister's chambers to meet Bhutto. It appears Bhutto had assigned Shaukat Hayat the task of persuading me to meet with him. We spoke for about fifteen minutes, once again receiving assurances from Bhutto that he was all in favor of settling his disputes with the NAP leaders amicably. By now Bhutto's declarations held little value and I wondered at the real meaning behind our meeting. Only a short while later it dawned on me that I had become party to yet another stunt. Bhutto was off very shortly to Afghanistan with the intention of holding discussions with Sirdar Daoud. His meeting with me, at the very last moment, was done simply to create a cordial impression on the Afghan leader. One can only guess about what assurances he was to give to Sirdar Daoud. Most probably he told the Afghan President that the NDP and he were working

⁵⁰⁸ Taken from pages 7 and 8 of my copy of the document issued in Jun 1976. It is titled 'Prime Minister's Secretariat (Public) Subject: NDP's Manifesto-A Critical Appreciation'.

⁵⁰⁹ The Manifesto and Constitution of the National Democratic Party of Pakistan, 1976.

⁵¹⁰ One can also question the amount of damage that has been wrought the nation in these decades by those self-proclaimed upholders of the 'ideology' of Pakistan. In a civilized society no one has the right to forcibly foist his version of 'patriotism' upon others and call those who disagree with his particular viewpoint 'traitors'.

closely to resolve the dispute between the government and the jailed leaders. The truth, of course, was quite to the contrary.

In June 1976, I issued an eight-point programme on behalf of the NDP. We believed that these points could form a basis of an alliance between all the Opposition parties. These points were:

1. The withdrawal of the state of emergency imposed in August 1972 and the restoration of genuine democracy and civil liberties.
2. The removal of all Press restrictions and the reinstatement of all banned newspapers and magazines.
3. The repeal of Section 144 and the restoration of the freedom to hold political meetings.
4. The release of all political prisoners and the rescinding of all cases pending against them in the special tribunals and other courts of law.
5. The departure of the armed forces from Balochistan and the resolution of the political dispute by peaceful methods.
6. The implementation *in toto* of the 1973 Constitution and the grant of complete autonomy to the provinces.
7. The provision of full benefits to the laborers and protection provided to them against arbitrary dismissals.
8. An end to government interference in educational institutions.

Shortly after we issued our eight-point programme we received an invitation from Hassan Mahmood, Pir Pagaro's brother-in-law, to attend a meeting at Lahore to discuss the possibilities of forming an Opposition alliance against the Bhutto regime. The meeting was presided over by Air Marshal Asghar Khan. During the course of the meeting Hassan Mahmood suggested that, if and when an alliance came into being, it be headed by Asghar Khan. Naturally, the NDP had little objection to that, but it was the next issue that brought doubts to my mind. We were each handed over a rather odd piece of paper to sign. It stated: 'The member parties...hereby declare that Air Marshal (retired) Muhammad Asghar Khan will be the leader of the Coalition Parliamentary Party and Prime Minister in event of the coalition forming a government in the centre for the term following the next general elections...'. This document was placed before us for signing at a stage where no one had, as yet, even agreed to form an alliance. We had

only commenced upon preliminary negotiations. Even the election date was yet to be announced by the government. Given the circumstances, NDP refused to sign.

At the NDP convention in April I had been given a special mandate by my party to contact Opposition parties with a view to forming a united front and I resolved to continue with my efforts. Having participated in these unsuccessful attempts I decided to make a serious attempt of my own. The NDP sent written invitations to leaders of six Opposition parties for a meeting at Lahore on 30 October 1976 with a view to forming a common front. The leaders invited were: Mufti Mahmood, acting Leader of the Opposition and head of Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Islam; Mian Tufail Muhammad, Amir Jamaat-i-Islami; Pir Pagaro, President Muslim League; Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani, President Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Pakistan; Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, President of Pakistan Democratic Party; Air Marshal (Retd.) Asghar Khan, President Tehrik-i-Istiqlal. With the notable exception of Asghar Khan; all the party heads accepted the invitation and turned up at Lahore on 29 October, for the meeting scheduled for the following morning. Each brought with him a number of other representatives, so it made for a sizeable gathering. The NDP was represented by Begum Wali Khan, Barrister Zahoorul Haque, Mehroz Akhtar, and myself. We all stayed at a hotel at Davis Road. Much to our consternation the hotel staff declined to serve us food. When I enquired as to their refusal, they informed me that they 'had no orders to serve us'. We had little choice but to go to a nearby hotel for our meals. Obviously, the government was not pleased by this meeting. There was more to follow.

* * *

In the middle of the night I received a disturbing call from my family. Five masked men had invaded the ground of my residence and, after hitting a sleeping servant on the head and rendering him unconscious, they tried to smash entry into the house. Unable to gain entry they then attempted to seize my cars. They managed to push one about ten feet towards the gate before the servants became alerted and rang the alarm. Members of my family then opened fire upon the intruders. In the dark the shots missed their targets. Unfortunately, all five intruders managed to flee unhurt. I would learn some years later from an unimpeachable senior PPP source that the attack had been arranged by Jam Sadiq Ali under the specific instructions of Bhutto, who probably wished to remind me of the vulnerability of my family.

My son, Sherazam, lodged an FIR written in English with the local police station. The police then claimed to translate it into Urdu and made my son sign the document written in Urdu without reading it. Unbeknown to him the facts had been radically altered. Soon the government began a petty newspaper campaign highlighting the differences between my statements about the incident and the Urdu document my son, unused to police chicanery, had unwisely signed. A sinister incident had been turned into a farce. This proved to be a typical crafty trait of Jam Sadiq Ali, as his other victims

would discover in the early 1990s when he was foisted upon Sindh as its Chief Minister, ironically, by a Bhutto-hating President Ghulam Ishaq Khan.

* * *

The morning after the incident the gathered assembly of Opposition parties met and agreed to form an alliance based upon a four-point programme:

1. Restoration of democracy according to the 1973 Constitution and annulment of all the arbitrary constitutional amendments which had rendered it ineffectual.
2. Supremacy and independence of the Judiciary.
3. The withdrawal of the state of emergency and 'black laws' and other curbs on civil liberties.
4. Economic, social and political justice.'

And, so, what later became known the Pakistan National Alliance came into being. As a result of my efforts to form the alliance I was appointed convenor for the time being. At the meeting Asghar Khan had been noticeable by his absence. Maulana Noorani strongly insisted that the Opposition alliance would be weakened without the presence of the retired Air Marshal.

The Opposition alliance held another meeting in Islamabad in the later part of November 1976. Once again, though invited, Asghar Khan was conspicuous by his absence. Prodded by Noorani, it was decided at the meeting to send a team to persuade him to join the alliance. The Opposition delegation consisted of Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, Maulana Noorani, myself and Khawaja Safdar, whose name had been added by Noorani himself. Asghar Khan invited the four of us for lunch at his house in Abbottabad.

On 22 November we left for Abbottabad in my jeep. I, of course had known the Air Marshal for a number of years. Right at the onset of our meeting I told him briefly of the special mandate given to me by the NDP to try and form an opposition alliance and my success so far. Then I tried to convince him that it was in all our greater interests to form a united front against* Bhutto, his reply was one that surprised both Professor Ghafoor and myself. Asghar Khan intimated that he would only join the joint Opposition if seats to be contested in the next elections were allocated among the various parties in advance. I negotiate quotas for the next election but had sent us to invite him to join on the basis of our four-point programme, I stressed that the real issue was the restoration of democracy - the date of the elections had not even been announced as yet. His

disappointing reply was, That is all idealistic wishful thinking. Let's now talk about practical politics'.

While Professor Ghafoor, I and others in the Opposition were aware of the political bond which had developed between Noorani and Asghar Khan, no one had quite realized that they now operated virtually as a team. It soon dawned on both Ghafoor Ahmed and myself that our trip to Abbottabad had been engineered by Noorani, who despite being a member of the delegation now began strongly supporting Asghar Khan and his stand on 'practical politics'. Asghar Khan demanded that JUP and Tehrik-i-Istiqlal be given sixty percent of all seats contested by the Alliance in the next general elections. Noorani, reading our looks of amazement, added that the matter of a sixty percent share was open to further negotiation and discussions. Ghafoor and I reminded them of the difficult realities facing the Opposition under the PPP rule, and that the Alliance parties had not even decided whether they would contest the next elections - we held serious doubts as to whether they would be free and impartial. Before we left Abbottabad it was decided that we would continue with our talks on 4 December at Noorani's house at Karachi. By that time Noorani dropped their demand to a fifty percent share of seats for JUP and Tehrik-i-Istiqlal.

The attitude of both Asghar Khan and Maulana Noorani led to a feeling of distrust on both sides as was revealed later. On 4 December Professor Ghafoor waited all day to hear from Noorani to receive confirmation of the scheduled meeting. Finally he rang me at 5.30 p.m. to find out what was happening. I informed him that Noorani had contacted me and confirmed that he was expecting us to meet with him and Asghar Khan for dinner at his place at 7 p.m. Then Ghafoor telephoned Noorani to enquire why he had not heard from him, to which Noorani replied that his telephone had been 'out of order'. Yes, there was a dinner being held at his place for Ghafoor and a number of other Opposition leaders, including Pir Pagaro. It became apparent the scheduled talks had now been transformed into a political dinner with a host of extra participants. In reply the justifiably irritated Ghafoor told him that he had kept the whole day free of engagements in anticipation of the meeting but as he had 'committed himself to a family function that evening it would be impossible for him to accept the dinner invitation at such short notice.

Four days later, on 8 December, Asghar Khan wrote a long and angry letter to Professor Ghafoor complaining of suffering 'unusual behavior' at the hands of the Opposition leaders, including Ghafoor's recent failure to show up for the dinner at Noorani's place. Other culprits, he wrote, included Mufti Mahmood and Pir Pagaro, who he accused of arriving consistently late to functions, hours after the scheduled time, having kept him needlessly waiting on several occasions. Another accusation was made against Pir Pagaro for his 'non-serious' attitude. The Air Marshal wrote that on 4 December Pir Pagaro 'informed me in all seriousness that the "Hurs" had decided that nothing should

be done and that he was not willing to discuss the mechanics of elections as the UDF had not decided to take part in the election'.

In the letter to Professor Ghafoor, Asghar Khan, mentioned his recent meeting with Pir Pagaro and expressed his real concerns:

I also candidly explained that we were NOT insisting that the UDF should participate in the elections because Tehrik-i-Istiqlal and the JUP would in any case be in the field and would have the support and the prayers of all those, including the well-wishers of the UDF, who wished to see this regime changed. It was only that we were anxious to avoid a contest with other elements of the Opposition and were therefore, suggesting that you at least discuss the area of cooperation in a possible election or alternatively give us an assurance that the UDF would remain out of the contest so that we could plan to take on the ruling party single-handed - a situation that we would welcome. I also explained that any late decision on your part to participate without prior understanding with us, would almost certainly render impossible any coordination for a joint effort in the elections and would pit us against each other in this contest.⁵¹¹

No mention was made in the letter of the JUP-Tehrik demand to be allocated a high percentage of seats in the 'next' elections.

On 7 January 1977 Bhutto, who had long dithered over the issue, announced suddenly that the elections would be held, two months later, on 7 March. He was undoubtedly confident that he would find the Opposition in complete disarray and the two-month period would prove too short a time for them to mobilize their resources and mount an effective campaign. Bhutto had by now come to rely largely on his team of advisors appointed from within the bureaucracy, and they had convinced him that the brief twelve-day period given to candidates for filing of papers for the National Assembly elections, the disunited Opposition parties would wrangle amongst themselves and would end up putting candidates against each other, thus leaving the field clear for the PPP candidates. Bhutto had received poor advice. As a bitter Kausar Niazi would later state:

[Bhutto] was laying faith in the same bureaucracy which he himself had completely outwitted in 1970 and won the elections to capture power. Since then those people had very stealthily and cleverly managed to wean him away and shatter his bonds with the masses to take him in their own grip. At the same time they did all they could do to lower the prestige of the devoted party workers in the eyes of the Chairman. Any bureaucrat granting a permit, a license or a plot to a party worker would simultaneously open a file on him and forward it to the

⁵¹¹ A copy of this letter was sent to me.

PM to prove their irregular and corrupt practices. What to talk of the brave party workers, even the Chairman was duped by this stratagem and he fell so deep into their net that he gradually started considering his own party as of no consequence and each one of its members to be someone out to grind his own axe. That is the reason that instead of relying on the power of the party and keeping faith in the masses he jumped into the field of elections on the 'secret steps' which Rao Rashid and company had presented before him.⁵¹²

While I do not hold any sympathy for the 'loyal' PPP workers who corruptly acquired 'permits, licenses or plots of land', Niazi does aptly describe Bhutto's disenchantment with his own party and his undivided reliance on a select coterie of bureaucrats, who knew little about politics of the masses, to shape his electoral plan. These bureaucrats - like Rao Rashid Khan, a policeman - were skilled in delivering what their political masters wished of them and were adept only at applying the forceful reins of authority against any obstructions that came in their way. In short they were the opposite of what was required to win support in an election campaign.

The announcement of the elections had a cathartic effect on the Opposition parties. The original Alliance of six parties NDP, JUI, Muslim League, Jamaat-i-Islami, JUP and PDP were soon joined by Asghar Khan and his Tehrik-i-Istiqlal. Sadly as has been the case in all alliances - then as well as now Nawabzada Nasrullah and those of his persuasion also brought in minor players such as Ashraf Khan's Khaksar Tehrik and Sirdar Qayum Khan's Muslim Conference to boost their voting position within the Alliance. Despite, minor misgivings, after months of effort we had finally achieved complete unity among all the Opposition parties that mattered. The nine-party alliance was named the Pakistan National Alliance and its formation was publicly announced on 10 January, barely three days after Bhutto's election announcement. It made mockery of the advice given to Bhutto by his specially appointed election council of bureaucrats.

On 15 January a meeting was held by the heads of all the component parties of the PNA to decide the leadership of the Alliance. The Muslim Leaguers - such as Zahoor Ellahi, Malik Qasim, Hassan Mahmood and Khavvaja Safdar - were keen to see Pir of Pagaro elected as leader. After his questionable performance as head of UDF, very few others were keen to support him. Asghar Khan wanted to throw his own name into the ring, but this was met with some resistance. Finally we, in the NDP, proposed Mufti Mahmood's name. As a veteran politician, Mufti Mahmood was known for never imposing his views on others but rather for striving to achieve consensus - a quality indispensable for one heading an alliance of such diverse parties. His name was approved by a majority support of seven of the nine parties.

⁵¹² Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, Jang Publishers, Lahore, 1991, p. 28.

There continued to be much uncertainty, even among RNA circles whether the Alliance would last. There is no denying the fact that minor players, such as the PDF and the Khaksar Tehrik, had caused heartburn among the rest with their demand for offices to be given to their party members, but concessions had to be made. Even the NDP demanded and forced the other parties to agree to a total boycott of all elections in Balochistan. As the late Mazhar Ali noted in the Viewpoint:

Though the NDP is the youngest political party, it has the largest number of its political workers and office bearers imprisoned and victimized since its formation. Such arrests appear not to have daunted the NDP's claim for a special position in Baluchistan and the Frontier....⁵¹³

The major point of contention, which also caused the uncertainty, remained the issue of the allocation of seats among the various parties. Those such as Pir Pagaro's Muslim League and Asghar Khan's Tehrik-i-Istiqlal were insisting on a share much beyond their actual strength. In contrast the Jamaat-i-Islami remained balanced in its approach and the NDP was agreeable to accepting whatever it got, simply to get the PNA off the ground and into the elections.

The distribution of the party tickets was, of course, not the only cause for friction in the PNA. We were a diverse mix of parties with strongly divergent views. In an interview with a correspondent of *The Observer*, the UK newspaper, I was quoted as saying that 'the nine-party alliance is grotesquely ill-sorted and, should it win, is unlikely to hold together for more than six months'.⁵¹⁴ Despite my apprehensions, the PNA was a marvel, it worked. Pushed into a corner, nothing united us more than our immediate goal - to oust Bhutto. The self-proclaimed political 'genius' had overreached himself. He had managed to unite us and each person within the PNA made a surprising effort to make it work. It was commendable that Asghar Khan gracefully accepted Mufti Mahmood's leadership. Other praiseworthy aspects of the PNA were the way the Jamaat-i-Islami adopted an unusually low profile, the temporary burial of religious hatchets between Noorani's JUP and Mufti Mahmood's JUI and the acceptance of NDP's demand to boycott elections in Balochistan. It augured well for the elections. The major parties were now in agreement, and for once the negative factors stirred up by the minor parties and their egotistic jockeying for influence through intrigue and by forging mini-alliances within the Alliance, were doomed to failure.

The PNA chose the plough for an election symbol. While the Election Commissioner acceded to our request, Hafiz Pirzada appealed against it on the basis that an election symbol could only be granted to an individual political party and not to an alliance of nine parties. A review petition was filed under Section 21 of the Representation of

⁵¹³ Obtained from a Press cutting in my collection which is unfortunate undated.

⁵¹⁴ *The Observer*, London, Sunday, 27 February 1977. The correspondent was Gavin Young.

People Act but in the end Bhutto allowed the allotment of the symbol by amending the Election rules to permit a common symbol for any two or more parties putting up joint candidates. Kausar Niazi regards this as Bhutto's biggest blunder of the 1977 campaign and he may well be right. According to him, Bhutto was confident that the PNA could not cause him any harm.

Under his special powers as the Chief Executive, he permitted the allotment of a common symbol to the PNA.

So far as that symbol, Plough, was concerned, the Prime Minister's close team of technocrats was of the opinion that it hardly held any attraction for the masses as compared to the People's Party's symbol, Sword. In fact they contended, that it would go to spoil the image of Mufti Mahmood and the other leaders in the PNA.⁵¹⁵

I would agree with Kausar Niazi when he states that Bhutto and his team of 'technocrats' were nonchalant over the issue of our election symbol. But I would go further and suggest that the reason for their nonchalance was that they had placed great faith in their planned 'Operation Victory'. By allowing the symbol Bhutto was using his developed penchant for theatrics to hold himself out to be a politically 'fair-minded' person and artfully donning the garb of a 'democrat'.

Having reached agreement on the allocation of seats the Opposition parties and their leadership soon became involved with the task of filing of candidates' papers by the final date of 19 January. The first sign of the government's electoral intentions became publicly apparent when Maulana Jan Muhammad Abbasi, the PNA candidate contesting Bhutto's Larkana seat was abducted by the police on the eve of registration simply to prevent him from filing his papers against the PPP leader. Taking cue from their leader, a host of other PPP leaders opted to follow a similar electoral route to victory. Among these were many who would later claim to be self-professed democrats. They were all from Sindh. The same took place at the time of nominations to the Provincial Elections. This 'illustrious' company included: Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Makhdoom Talib-ul-Maula of Hala, Liaquat Ali Jatoi, Mehran Khan Bijarani, Atta Muhammad Marri, Malik Sikander Khan, Sultan Ahmed Chandio, Makhdoom Muhammad Zaman, and Yusuf Chandio.⁵¹⁶

Among the provincial PPP candidates all four chief minister's ensured that they would not be 'disgraced' by the appearance of any rival candidate in their constituencies. Thus,

⁵¹⁵ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 50.

⁵¹⁶ Others who got elected unopposed from Sindh were Noor Muhammad Lund, Allan Khan Leghari, Haji Syed Fateh Din, Niaz Muhammad Wassan, Abdullah Halepoto, Najamuddin Sarewal, Shabbir Ahmed Shah and Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. From Balochistan four PPP National Assembly candidates got themselves elected unopposed: Taj Muhammad Jamali, Abdul Nabi Jamali, Agha Mohiyuddin and Amanullah Gechki.

Nasrullah Khattak, Sadiq Hussain Qureshi, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Muhammad Khan Barozai declared themselves elected to the provincial assemblies unopposed.

This disgraceful display of political thuggery led even a PPP stalwart, such as Kausar Niazi, to later comment:

Having [Maulana Abbasi] carried away and kept in police custody till the filing of the nomination papers was such a feat of bureaucracy which [*sic*] cast an indelible slur on the electoral integrity of the Prime Minister and brought disrepute to the concept of fair elections...As per later reports, Maulana Jan Muhammad Abbasi had been taken into custody by the police on the evening of 18th January and released the next morning after the time of filing the nomination papers was over. The statements issued by him in this connection formed the very basis of the PNA's election campaign. It was this very doing of the bureaucracy which went to cause untold harm to the People's Party's electoral campaign.⁵¹⁷

While Niazi is quick to blame the sycophantic officials - namely Muhammad Khan Junejo, the Sindh Home Secretary, and Khalid Ahmed Kharral, Deputy Commissioner Larkana - it is unlikely, taking their supine nature into account, that they would have had the temerity to interfere in Bhutto's personal constituency without Bhutto's direct blessing. My view was later corroborated by Rafi Raza, who stated:

I met [Bhutto] on his return from Larkana ... I said his unopposed election was astonishing; no one could accept that the PNA candidate had simply failed to show up. The error was further compounded by the publicity given to the 'Undisputed Leader', as it were a presidential election. He tetchily asked why, if I was surprised at his unopposed election, I did not enquire how my friend Mumtaz was similarly elected from Larkana: 'Surely I am better known than Mumtaz [Bhutto]?' Later I did enquire, and my worst fears were confirmed.⁵¹⁸

It is interesting that two senior PPP figures of that period later chose to stress the importance of the Abbasi kidnapping and the subsequent spate of unopposed elections and the negative impact on the electorate. Raja Anwar, a close acolyte and adviser to Bhutto on student and labor affairs, said:

Bhutto's advisers had assured him that these electoral walkovers would be seen abroad as evidence of his popularity, while at home people would conclude that it was futile to oppose a party whose leadership had returned without contest.

⁵¹⁷ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 55.

⁵¹⁸ Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan, 1967-1977*, op. cit., p.

One of the co-authors of this advice [Muhammad Hayat Taman] asserted that the average citizen invariably sided with the powerful and victorious.⁵¹⁹

The PNA began its election campaign by holding its first public meeting at Karachi's Nishtar Park on 23 January. Despite the government's suspension of bus and other transport services to the area and a misinformation campaign spreading rumors of expected violent disturbances, a massive crowd showed up. Later newspaper estimates put it at over 150,000 - making it one of the biggest gathering that had been held in Karachi until then. The crowd was in an exuberant mood. We all took turns to address the mammoth assembly. In my speech, I could not help but inform the crowd about the tragic plight of the people of Balochistan and openly defended my jailed friends who had been prodigiously dubbed as traitors in the government controlled media. To my dismay when it came to Rafique Bajwa's turn, he produced a copy of the Holy Koran and proceeded to pledge on it. 'We will keep PNA's unity intact', was what he promised. Personally, I always disapproved of using religion to score points in politics.⁵²⁰

When Asghar Khan, in his speech, rhetorically asked whether the PPP Government should be held accountable for its excesses, the assembled thousands roared their approval. The mood of Karachi seemed stridently anti-Bhutto. And as later PNA rallies in other parts of the country would reveal, a large part of the populace had become fed up with the PPP regime. This was watched with increasing dismay in Islamabad. As the PPP Minister of Communications and Information later was to state:

The most difficult situation which these advisers had to face was when the lifting of Section 144 restrictions, there was a flood of processions and public meetings under the auspices of the PNA. In February 1977, when the election campaign was at its peak, their wishful thinking had been obliterated and the high hopes they had given to the Prime Minister were nowhere in evidence. The farce of the unopposed victories they had put up initially lay exposed.⁵²¹

The long years of Press censorship and the suppression of any attempts by the Opposition to address the public had backfired. A direct consequence of this 'blockade' imposed on us was that the public was genuinely interested in hearing our point of view. People flocked to PNA rallies in ever increasing numbers. In Hyderabad we addressed another record breaking crowd. Later a huge number of participants, estimated to be 70,000 strong, marched in procession through the narrow streets of the

⁵¹⁹ Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, Vanguard, Lahore, 1998, p. 15.

⁵²⁰ Unfortunately, after the arrest of all the front rank leadership of the movement came into the hands of second tier leaders who bolstered the agitation by using 'Nizam-e-Mustafa' as a political slogan. While I confess to an abiding faith in God, I believe that religion should always be kept out of politics. It's been my experience that those who use Islam in this manner often do so very unscrupulously.

⁵²¹ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 57.

old city where they were showered with rose petals. While passing the Hyderabad Central Jail they chanted 'Withdraw the Conspiracy Case! Release Wali Khan! Release Attaullah Mengal! Release Ghous Buksh Bizenjo! Release Khair Buksh Marri!' When a team of PNA leaders went to tour Balochistan we met with the same response.

A few days later Bhutto held a rally at Nishtar Park. The Press which, only days before, had been hailing him as 'The Supreme Leader, The Undisputed Leader, The Great Leader' now described this meeting as 'the largest ever held in Asia',⁵²² In the course of his address at Nishtar Park, he delivered a personal attack on me. Then much to my sorrow, he added, 'While this person constantly opposes me, his own son has written to me, disowning his father and pledging his loyalty to me. The letter is in my pocket'. He then extracted a letter and waved it at the crowd.

* * *

Regretfully, Sher Ali, born to my second wife, had been a difficult child from an early age. He willfully left Aitchison College, without finishing his A level education, to follow his obsession with the idea of becoming a tribal sirdar. Subsequently, on several occasions I had to admonish him for his oppressive attitude towards the tribe. By the time he was twenty-one, he had already broken the law on at least two counts. These incidents provided the PPP regime an advantage in their campaign against me, and the government issued special orders that Sher Ali be immediately apprehended and rumors were purposely spread that he was to be 'shot on sight'.

Despite my anger at Sher Ali for his criminal behavior, I was faced with a *fait accompli*. As a father my first duty was to protect my son's life. I made him come to Karachi, where he hid at my house for a while. Then I arranged with Naseem Wali Khan to look after him. I counseled Sher Ali, to bolster his courage, mentioning that many others of our race were also facing a dire predicament in Balochistan, and that he should face his situation with brave fortitude until a solution could be found. I told him that tyrants never lasted forever. To my sorrow instead of following my advice, after a brief stay in the NWFP, he went to meet his uncle, my brother, Mir Balakh Sher, at Lahore. I subsequently learnt from my friend Sadiq Qureshi that Sher Ali wrote a submissive letter to Bhutto expressing his profound apologies and seeking a pardon. That was the letter that Bhutto, much to my dismay, had delightedly displayed to the thousands who had assembled at Nishtar Park. On receiving the letter, Bhutto had issued immediate orders for all charges to be dropped against Sher Ali. I had expected better from a son of mine, and was sorrowfully disappointed. Unfortunately, he was to bring more pain to me over the years that followed. I even paid for his education at Columbia in New

⁵²² The Government's Press Information Department had, on 20 January 1977, instructed all newspapers to print a large 3 by 8 inch photograph Bhutto with the caption of 'The Supreme Leader, The Undisputed Lead The Great Leader'.

York, but my efforts were to no avail. Finally, in 1997, I was driven to publicly disown him when he forged my signature and involved me in a fraudulent property case.

In the meanwhile, the PNA campaign was proceeding with great success. We were mobbed and cheered at every location. With nearly five years of harsh Press censorship, a large number of the intelligentsia were taken aback by the response the PNA was receiving among the masses. It appeared that the regime's attempt at brainwashing the newspaper readership had only been partially successful. Having read nothing but news of the government's popularity, the 'brilliance' of its leader, and almost nothing about the Opposition, this 'turnaround' came as a complete surprise to some and caused a degree of disbelief in others. The reality was simple, a majority of the voters had over time simply had enough of Bhutto. With the strict censorship in place nothing had ever been done to gauge the true mood of the people without incurring the wrath of the regime. Fear had been the all-prevailing factor. It was only when state controls were temporarily relaxed for the election campaign that people felt confident enough to openly express their views. In its election edition the *Herald* magazine commented:

In the next and last week of the election campaign, the dominant question will be: Who will win? The PPP or the PNA?

To predict with a high degree of precision the outcome of the electoral contest on March 7 (for the National Assembly) and March 10 (for provincial assemblies) is a pretty hazardous business.⁵²³

It must be remembered that the real strength of the PNA was in its unity. In the 1970 election, when Bhutto was truly at the height of his popularity, the PPP had won only 38.89 percent of the total vote in West Pakistan and that was when all the other parties had actively campaigned against each other. Now that all the other parties, of any consequence, were allied against the PPP, the vote could only split in two ways, rather than in a myriad ways, as was the case in the 1970 elections.

In Punjab, largely with the promise of the thousand-year-war and anti-India invective, in 1970 Bhutto had succeeded in getting 41.66 percent of the province's vote. Five years of PPP power had seen the party structure crumble into factious disunity, and alienated most of the PPP's ardent political workers. The brutal violence and open corruption begun by Khar's administration had further damaged the party image. Bhutto was no longer the popular young rebel who had opposed Ayub Khan and had threatened to reveal the so-called 'secrets' of Tashkent. Instead, he was now commonly viewed as an autocratic leader who wanted total power. In the changed circumstances, the large backing that Bhutto received from Punjab in 1970 was no longer there. Further, the two-way contest would now ensure that all non-PPP votes would only go to the PNA

⁵²³ Hamid Hussein, 'Election '77 What?'. *Herald*, Karachi, March 19 p. 12.

candidates. In a free and fair contest, it was clear that PPP's 'Fortress Punjab' had collapsed.

In 1970 the PPP had only received 14.28 percent of the vote in the NWFP and won only one national seat, which was that of Abdul Khaliq Khan, who later, ironically, joined the NDP. In the earlier election, parties now representing the PNA had won 10 out of the total of 18 seats. The remaining 7 seats had gone to the Qayum League. The PPP in recent times had improved their position at the expense of Abdul Qayum Khan, who, once Bhutto gauged that his utility had ceased, had been unceremoniously dumped from his alliance with the PPP. But the PPP was weak structurally partly due to the continuing feud between Chief Minister, Nasrullah Khattak, and the Governor. The 1977 election in the NWFP was incorrectly assumed by many to be a three-way contest. Nevertheless, all commentators had given a clear lead to the PNA, largely because of its two component parties - the JUI and the NDP. In its pre-election issue, *Herald*, stated that '[in the NWFP], while no one will be able to muster a complete majority... the PNA, is likely to have an edge in the National Assembly seats'. As far as we were concerned, the PNA combined NWFP vote-bank of NDP-JUI, as well as other parties such as the Jamaat-i-Islami, would easily take more than half the National Assembly seats in the province. In a fair election we, in the NDP, were anticipating a sweep in the province.

In Sindh, in the 1970 elections, Bhutto had cultivated the Sindhi landed gentry to his own advantage. Apart from leftists, such as Rasool Buksh Talpur - who had left the PPP - and Pir Pagaro and his followers, the landed gentry of Sindh remained with the PPP for their mutual advantage. However, in the province there was one stark difference between 1970 and 1977, and that was the bitter divide engendered by the bloody language riots of 1972. Largely thanks to Mumtaz Bhutto the province had been cleaved into two. The language riots, the creation of the job quota system, limiting government jobs for the *muhajirs* and the exclusion of Karachi from the power structure, ensured PNA a complete dominance in urban Sindh.

Among the PNA there was a strong and growing conviction that the elections would result in victory. This would eventually and convincingly be proved by the deserted polling booths on 10 March 1977, when the PNA called on the public to boycott the provincial elections. This phenomenon was not just restricted to urban Pakistan; polling booths were deserted all over the whole country. Those who still persist on insisting that that PPP would have won the 1977 elections - even if they had not been rigged - should answer this simple question: Where was the PPP support on the day of the provincial elections?

Vaqar Ahmed, Bhutto's Cabinet Secretary, made a very revealing admission. He disclosed that he was informed by Akram Sheikh, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, 'that on the day of the election Mr. Bhutto was in the control room and about 12 o'clock he got panicky and said that PPP was losing. It appears at that time certain

instructions went at least to Chief Secretary Punjab which resulted in large scale rigging'.⁵²⁴ It is worthwhile noting that on that election day even Bhutto believed that he had lost the election.

* * *

Kausar Niazi states in his election memoirs that 'one of Mr. Bhutto's intense desires was well known to me; he had expressed that more than once in my presence. And that was ... he wanted a victory with two-thirds majority!'⁵²⁵ Bhutto needed a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly to amend the Constitution to obtain his cherished goal of a presidential political system with him, of course, as the President. In reaching the Constitutional Accord of October 1972 the Opposition had stubbornly resisted all attempts by him to sway us towards agreeing to a presidential form of government. Now Bhutto wanted the 1977 election to give him what the Opposition had long denied - him, and to get it he was prepared to rig the elections. But it was important - as Rao Rashid put it in a note to his master - that 'The elections have to appear credible not only inside the country but outside the country as well'.⁵²⁶ Much easier said than done, in practice it proved to be far more elusive and difficult.

The first plan formulated seems to have been the so-called 'Larkana' Plan. In April 1976, Bhutto sent a copy of this plan to Rafi Raza to improve upon. The plan envisaged the setting up of influential committees appointed at district level which would 'be responsible for the overall control and directions of the election in the district'. The district committee, the membership of which would include the local Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, would obtain reports on a daily basis from junior committees set up at the constituency and village levels, and then issue instructions based upon these reports. Further, a committee would also be formed for each polling station with the specific task of ensuring that 'on election day... the votes are cast in favor of the right candidate'. According to Rafi Raza's annotations on the document, he appears to have given the plan his approval, barring two insignificant alterations.

A more encompassing plan was put up by Ali Muhammad Rashidi. Rashidi was once a well-known sycophant of Ayub Khan's, who then rapidly transferred his loyalties to Bhutto and was appointed information adviser. In 1975 Rashidi had sent a written request asking his new mentor for a job for his son. Bhutto's annotation on the job application reads: 'We are responsible for Rashidi and all his sons because he told Ayub

⁵²⁴ From a statement made by Vaqar Ahmed, Federal Cabinet Secretary Government *White Paper on the Conduct of the General Elections in March 1977*, July 1978, Annexure 28, p. A-91.

⁵²⁵ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵²⁶ In a note from Rao Rashid Khan, head of the PM's Secretariat, to B dated 30 May 1976: *The Government White Paper on the Conduct of the General Elections in March 1977*, July 1978, Annexure 12, p. A-35.

Khan to get me shot. That is life; what more can we do for these loyal bunch of faithfuls'.⁵²⁷

In May 1976 the ever 'faithful' Rashidi submitted a detailed secret election plan relating to wide ranging activities - dealing with publicity of the PPP regime's 'spectacular acts' to revising electoral laws. Included, among the many things Rashidi suggested, were:

- we should have a list of sensitive constituencies and of persons who must not be allowed to be elected. We should have [*sic*] special programme for conducting elections in such marked constituencies...
- Detailed work on polling stations and on choice of persons from among the officials who will conduct elections...
- 'Surrogates' in each constituency whom we can put up as candidates in event of the Opposition boycotting the election to cover its discomfiture and give us a bad name.
- We must set up our own machinery of a quality which leaves nothing to be desired [Rashidi's own underlining]. When I say this it means a great deal.⁵²⁸

Bhutto sent Rashidi's plan to Rao Rashid Khan with instructions to improve upon it. In his reply to Bhutto, Rao Rashid submitted a new revision of the plan. He covered every detail submitted earlier by Rashidi under separate headings, including the following:

- Mr. Rashidi has also recommended that we should have a list of those persons ready who should not get elected at any cost. This can only be done after the nomination papers have been filed and it is known how many of such people would really be in the field. However, spade work by the Intelligence Bureau can be done even at this stage...
- The Provinces are already busy making lists of officials who will be engaged as Polling and Presiding Officers on the day of the election. The work of weeding out of undesirable and undependable officials shall be completed by the first of August [1976]. In each province, during my visits and personal meetings with Chief Secretaries I have conveyed the Prime

⁵²⁷ From a copy of a personal letter from Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi to Bhutto, dated 7 July 1975: *The Government White Paper on the Performance of the Bhutto Regime*, Vol. II, Treatment of Fundamental State, January 1979, Annexure 54, p. A-129.

⁵²⁸ From a copy of a note from Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi to Bhutto: *Government White Paper on the Conduct of the General Elections in March 1977*, July 1978, Annexure 11, pp. A-21 to A-29.

Minister's concern in this regard and made them realize the importance of having absolutely reliable and dependable officials for this job.

[To] meet the alleged threat of the Opposition to boycott the elections ... a handful of surrogate candidates would not restore the credibility of the elections; it will be restored onK' if certain surrogate Opposition parties remain in the field to generate apparent but controlled heat in the elections to make it appear well-contested. In this connection I have held very fruitful discussions with certain Opposition Parties/Leaders...⁵²⁹

Needless to say, the revised plan was carried out in totality. Even the Rashidi suggestion of 'The Spectacular Acts' was taken to the hilt. This was commemorated by a lengthy propaganda blitz in the media which went on for a number of weeks 'highlighting' the achievements of a particular government Ministry each week. More importantly:

- A fortnight before the elections, on 23 February, Rao Rashid Khan issued a list of Opposition candidates. He issued instructions that 'special efforts need to be made to keep these listed candidates out of the Assemblies'. I was very much on the list of these 'chosen' few.⁵³⁰
- On 17 June 1976 Bhutto wrote to his three Chief Ministers and the Chief Secretary of Balochistan giving them instructions to be followed in the preparation of lists of Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers and assistants manning the polling stations.⁵³¹ He stated:

It is extremely important that the right type of personnel are selected for these appointments. The utmost care has, therefore, to be exercised in selecting them and it has to be fully ensured that persons of biased political leanings are not selected. The available personnel should be thoroughly vetted through the Special Branches and only the most dependable officers should be selected.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ From a copy of a secret memo from Rao Rashid Khan, head of the Secretariat, to Bhutto, dated 30 May 1976, *ibid.*, Annexure 12, p. A-30 A-35.

⁵³⁰ From a copy of a 'Secret' note from Rao Rashid Khan, head of the Secretariat, to Bhutto, dated 30 May 1976, *ibid.*, Annexure 188, p. A-51 to A-520.

⁵³¹ The imposition of Federal Government rule in Balochistan came to end on 6 December 1976 when Muhammad Khan Barozai was made chief minister.

⁵³² From copies of the official letters from Bhutto to the four Chief Minister, dated 17 June 1976, *ibid.*: Annexure 30, pp. A-93 to A-96.

- The chosen surrogate candidates/parties remained a closely guarded secret. Even Rao Rashid Khan avoided writing their names in his secret memorandum of the revised Rashidi plan sent to Bhutto. Referring to his 'fruitful discussions' with 'certain Opposition Leaders/Parties' he added that I would report the result of my discussions to [Bhutto] personally to safeguard secrecy'.⁵³³ I harbored my suspicions on who these were, but in absence of solid proof it would not be proper to name them.
- Rashidi's suggestion of creating a 'machinery of a quality which leaves nothing to be desired' was implemented in full. In Rao Rashid Khan's own words to Bhutto:

Under the directions of the Prime Minister I visited all the four provinces and met the Chief Secretaries. The Special Cells will start functioning in each Province from the 1st of June [1976] to handle election matters, and gradually expanded as the volume of work increases. The Cells shall function under the direct control of the Chief Secretaries. Special Cells shall also be created in all the Special Branches.⁵³⁴

Having formulated their 'Operation Victory' the PPP Election team complacently awaited what they thought would be an effortless victory. Rao Rashid went even as far as to write to the Prime Minister that 'I will respectfully submit that we should look ... beyond the next General Elections and PPP's easy victory'.⁵³⁵ It was only after lifting of Section 144 restrictions and the subsequent flood of public to the PNA meetings, did it dawn upon their bureaucratic mindset that disaster lay round the corner for them. The nine-party alliance was suddenly emerging as a winner. In the words of the much-respected journalist I. H. Burney. 'Two months of hectic electioneering had unleashed a mass upsurge which had no parallel in the history of the country'.⁵³⁶ Bhutto and his election team were no longer confident that their planned 'Operation Victory' would be sufficient on its own to rig a victory. By their subsequent actions, it appears with startling clarity, that they now decided that they would have to do much more to 'win' the elections.

Not surprisingly, Bhutto's team chose the most direct approach to solve their problem and that was to pressurize the local administration in the constituencies to deliver the 'votes' to them. Driven to sudden desperation, Bhutto's aides did not bother to hide

⁵³³ From a copy of a secret memo from Rao Rashid Khan, head of the Secretariat, to Bhutto, dated 30 May 1976, *ibid.*, Annexure 12, p. A-30.

⁵³⁴ From a copy of a secret memo from Rao Rashid Khan, head of the Secretariat, to Bhutto, undated, *ibid.*, Annexure 31, p. A-98.

⁵³⁵ From a copy of a secret memo, from Rao Rashid Khan, head of the Secretariat, to Bhutto, dated 10 June 1976, *ibid.*, Annexure 16, p. A-55.

⁵³⁶ I. H. Burney, 'March '77 Elections: An Analysis', *Pakistan Economics*, 23 July 1977, p. 16.

their trail. Copies of dozens of original documents later published in the Government *White Paper on the Conduct of the General Elections* provide copious evidence of their activities.

The NWFP was a prime example of such misdeeds. Bhutto assigned Muhammad Hayat Taman, his Political Adviser, the urgent task of making election preparations in the NWFP. Taman arrived in Peshawar in January 1977 and spent the next two months touring the area until the elections were held. Even General Imtiaz, Bhutto's Military Secretary was sent there for a lengthy period of three weeks to assist Taman. Their activities were blatant and little attempt was made at discretion.

Saeed Ahmed Akhtar (then Deputy Commissioner, Mansehra District, NWFP) describing a meeting held by them, stated:

Then the Chief Secretary addressed us, praised Mr. Bhutto and his regime and was apprehensive of a great loss to Pakistan in case the PNA won the election. General Imtiaz and Mr. Taman agreed with him ... The Chief Secretary suggested ... much could be done to help the PPP candidates. He suggested that the Returning Officers could fill ... ballot [boxes for a] few polling stations for a PPP candidate and this box could later be exchanged with another by the Presiding Officer. He also suggested that even after the close of the polls when the Presiding Officer is on his way back, he can use the unused ballot papers for the PPP candidates.⁵³⁷

Muhammad Azam Khan (then Commissioner, Hazara Division, NWFP) stated:

... the VIPs [General Imtiaz and Chief Secretary, NWFP] wanted to know the specific kinds of help we would be able to provide PPP candidates. They discussed the possibility of rigging and malpractices which could be resorted to under the circumstances. Amongst other suggestions we were asked to direct the Presiding Officers to tamper with the sealed bags sent to them by the Election Commission on the night before the polling day. The objective was to fill a number of ballot boxes beforehand in favor of PPP candidates. These boxes were to be introduced and placed amongst the filled boxes sometimes during the middle of the day when the polling agents of various parties went out for a break. It was also suggested that Returning Officers should call all the Presiding

⁵³⁷ From an eyewitness account given by Saeed Ahmed Akhtar, Deputy Commissioner and Returning Officer of NA-15: The Government White Paper on the Conduct of the General Elections in March 1977, *ibid.*, Annexure 40, p. A-123. This statement was corroborated in its entirety by Khalid Mansoor, then Deputy Commissioner, Abbottabad District, NWFP, who was also present on the occasion, *ibid.*, Annexure 280. p. A-771 to A-774.

Officers and issue them with the above instructions as well as any other instructions they may deem necessary towards achieving the desired objective.⁵³⁸

Even on election day when the results were plainly going against the PPP, Taman, General Imtiaz and the NWFP Chief Secretary were busy trying to manipulate the results with the assistance of the senior administration of the province.

The Deputy Commissioner (and Returning Officer) of Kohistan District, NWFP, who was earlier instructed to keep the results of his constituency a secret was then summoned to Abbottabad for a meeting by the troika. At the meeting he was threatened 'with dire consequences' if he did not accede to the Chief Secretary's request to make up the deficiency in the PPP candidate's votes and reverse the result.

I expressed my inability to do so telling them that my job was to simply compile the results received from the Presiding Officers, to pass them on to the quarter concerned and to announce it officially. All three got annoyed. Mr. Taman inquired from me as to what type of a Deputy Commissioner was I [*sic*] when called to do such a thing. I kept mum. The Chief Secretary then told the Commissioner and the DIG Police to take me outside and explain the position.

The DIG then took me aside [and] in the presence of the Commissioner threatened me with dire consequences if I did not reverse the results and declare a candidate of their choice successful. He informed me that the PPP had already won a majority in the Centre and it was certain that they would form their Government. He said that the officers present inside were bent upon taking action against those who did not help them. He informed me that my dismissal would not take days but hours. He told me to level a charge against me was a very thing [*sic*] and they could level any charge against me.⁵³⁹

I was standing as a candidate for the National Assembly from two constituencies: Karachi and Peshawar. Interestingly, in a derailed intelligence report jointly compiled by the Intelligence Bureau and the ISI and presented to Bhutto on 19 February 1977, the agencies had forecast that PPP would win 13 seats out of the 26 seats in the NWFP. But despite their conviction that the PPP would win half the seats, the report conceded seven definite wins to the PNA. Among these seven was NA-3 Peshawar seat, where it was made clear that it would be won by Sherbaz Mazari against his PPP rival Aftab

⁵³⁸ From an eyewitness account given by Muhammad Azam Khan. Commissioner Hazara Division, *ibid.*, Annexure 62,43. A-186.

⁵³⁹ From an eyewitness account given by Syed Abid Hussain, Deputy Commissioner Kohistan District, *ibid.*, Annexure 281, p. A-775.

Sherpao.⁵⁴⁰ The report proved to be wrong. The PNA won 17 of the 26 seats; the PPP, notwithstanding an all out effort by Taman, General Imtiaz and the senior provincial administration, won only 8 seats; and the last remaining seat was won by Qayum League. But despite the PNA sweep I lost from Peshawar.

Ironically, the very report which had forecast a clean win for me in the NA-3 seat, also had then placed me on top of a nation-wide list of those 'who ought to lose' in the regime's interest.⁵⁴¹ So, in the seat which both the ISI and the IB had deemed a safe win for me only sixteen days before the election date, I was to experience a defeat. A year later, when the secret report was revealed to the public, it became transparent to all that I had been a victim to a concentrated effort ensuring my defeat. Part of the reason lay in the fact that Bhutto had been adamant that the only person allowed to win from more than one electorate was Bhutto himself. He did not wish to share this distinction with anyone else. Even with the benefit of hindsight, there was little I could have done to counter the NWFP administration's determination to defeat me. I had left the final part of my Peshawar campaign in the hands of my NDP colleagues. On election day I was at Karachi busy working for my other seat.

Unlike the strategy employed in the NWFP, Bhutto adopted a two-pronged approach in the Punjab. The senior administration was given the task of producing the results, and the PPP politicians the job of organizing the election. The use of the Chief Secretary of each province as a point of control was pivotal to their plan. Shortly after Bhutto announced the elections, retired Brigadier Zafar Malik, Punjab's Chief Secretary, summoned all senior members of the Punjab bureaucracy, including the IG Police, all the Commissioners, DIGs and a select group of DCs and SPs. At the meeting he laid down the policy for the coming elections. According to one of those present:

The Chief Secretary said that Mr. Bhutto had laid down the guidelines for the elections. It was that he did not want to win an election which he might lose internationally. Hence everything is to be done carefully. The Chief Secretary further said that the requirement was 80% seats, 70% would be a good performance but below 60% would not be acceptable...National level leaders and candidates should not be arrested at all without Government clearance. He further gave instructions that PPP candidates should be recommended so that their prestige is built up. Even officials were so required urgently [*sic*] be also transferred at the request of the PPP candidates. After the

⁵⁴⁰ From a copy of a 'secret/immediate' memo from Akram Sheikh, Director of Intelligence Bureau, to Bhutto, dated 19 February 1977, *ibid.*, Annexure 200, 200A and 201, pp. A-573-A-575 and Annexure 205 pp. A-584 to A-633.

⁵⁴¹ From an attachment to the 'secret/immediate' memo from Akram S Director Internal Bureau, to Bhutto, dated 19 February 1977, *ibid.*, Annexure 204, p. A-581.

meeting was over the IG showed some indecent posters pertaining to Opposition leaders.⁵⁴²

The IB/ISI secret intelligence report had given the following report on the Punjab (inclusive of the Federal Area of Islamabad):

Clear win to PPP	33
Clear win to the Opposition	32
Doubtful but leaning towards PPP	24
Doubtful but leaning towards the Opposition	12
Could go either way	5

The report however warned that these figures were on the optimistic side as it went on to state:

This province needs much greater attention. With concerted effort, the Party can hope to win $33 + 24 = 57$ seats. With extra effort it could retrieve at least 10 or 15 undecided seats. The overall success of the party could be in the region of 60%. The party needs to work much harder to improve upon this percentage.⁵⁴³

It is worth noting that the Intelligence Bureau and the ISI had said that only after 'a concerted effort' on part of the PPP would it get 57 seats and that still left the party in a minority, as Punjab provided 116 seats to the National Assembly. In my view even this report was optimistic: as it had earlier ignored the PNA sweep in the NWFP, it now overlooked the true PNA strength in the Punjab, particularly the urban and more literate to the fore. On election day, it held back from releasing election results soon after the Chief Secretary received the panicked call from Bhutto. Then the district and division officials took it upon themselves to blatantly doctor the results. I am sure when the final verdict came out (a preposterous 108 out of the 116 seats to the PPP) even these bureaucrats would have been astounded by the cumulative result of their individual handiwork. Ensnared in Islamabad, even Bhutto lost his composure. According to US Ambassador, Henry Byroade, who was with Bhutto at the time:

The results were coming in about 70 percent. He was losing Karachi. He was losing in Peshawar. Then the Punjabi numbers started coming in and guys who were absolute thugs won by 99 percent. Then Bhutto became absolutely quiet and started drinking heavily, calling Lahore, and he said, 'What are you [people]

⁵⁴² From an eyewitness account given by Muhammad Baqir Superintendent of Police, Gujrat District, *ibid.*, Annexure 284, p. A-793

⁵⁴³ From a copy of a 'secret/immediate' memo from Akram Sheikh, Di Internal Bureau, to Bhutto, dated 19 February 1977, *ibid.*, Annexure 20 p. A-574.

doing?...! saw Bhutto at 8 the next morning, and he wasn't himself. He hadn't had any sleep, obviously drinking. He was just sad.⁵⁴⁴

In Sindh, by election day 18 seats had been won unopposed by PPP candidates. This worked out as an incredible 42 percent of the total of 43 National Assembly seats from the province. Looked at in the clear light of day, it was nothing but a ludicrous exercise in political hubris. Even one of their senior PPP colleagues cynically observed, 'Looking at [these] stalwarts elected unopposed, there were hardly a few who appeared to deserve the honor'.⁵⁴⁵ In all the cases, including Bhutto's, it had been achieved by the application of brute force by the district administration and police force.

The Deputy Commissioner of Sukkur reported that three days before the election the provincial Chief Minister visited the city where he issued instructions to the District administration 'that the candidates of the ruling party were to be helped in all possible ways'. Within a few hours nearly a hundred PNA workers were arrested by the police in Sukkur.⁵⁴⁶ In Karachi, in the days preceding the election, hundreds of PNA workers were similarly detained. The purpose behind these detentions was to dishearten PNA supporters and frighten them into inaction. According to the Sindh Home Secretary of the day:

PNA workers were arrested before the election on the orders of the Chief Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. Names were given to the Chief Minister by his party workers. He held meetings with the Chief Secretary, IGP, Home Secretary and DIG Karachi, and gave the names of people against whom action was to be taken by DIGP, Karachi. The then Chief Minister told officials that these were the persons who were indulging in attacks on PPP meetings and processions and should be tried under DPR. The obvious purpose was to weaken the PNA which was strong in Karachi and Hyderabad towns.⁵⁴⁷

Karachi had very quickly become the PNA bastion in Sindh. With the exception of a few, such as Hafiz Pirzada, and perhaps Abdul Sattar Gabol - who had support among the Balochi speaking Makrani community in Lyari - the rest of the PPP candidates in Karachi were an indifferent lot. While Pirzada was partly counting on the PPP-Sindh vote-bank in Malir, most of the others held political ambitions based solely on the complete support of the local administration. They included: Akbar Liaquat Ali Khan - his claim only rested on being the late Liaquat Ali Khan's son; Jamiluddin Aali - a known Urdu poet; Hakim Muhammad Said - of Hamdard fame; Ali Mahmood - a

⁵⁴⁴ In an interview with Stanley Wolpert: (Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutt Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 279).

⁵⁴⁵ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 56.

⁵⁴⁶ From an eyewitness account given by Manzoor Hussain Bhutto, Deputy Commissioner Sukkur: *The Government White Paper on the Conduct of the General Elections in March 1977*, op. cit., Annexure 309-A, p. A-8.

⁵⁴⁷ From a statement made by Muhammad Khan Junejo, Home Secretary Sindh Government, *ibid.*, Annexure 67, p. A-255.

young deserter from NAP and related to the Haroon family of Karachi; Kamal Azfar - who had lost from Karachi in the 1970 elections; Nabi Dad (N. D.) Khan - then an unknown PPP worker. Other 'luminaries' included Malik Mir Hazar, a Pathan marble dealer, Imdad Ali Shah, and Suleman Hussain Ghanchi.

On the day before the elections, 6 March, all the Returning Officers in Karachi were summoned to the Chief Minister's House where they were all in turn called separately into a committee room. In the committee room there was a gathering comprising most of the PPP candidates and led by Hafiz Pirzada. Muhammad Khan Junejo, the provincial Home Secretary was also present. In their presence Pirzada informed each Returning Officer what was expected of him the following day. According to one Returning Officer 'the main aim of the meeting was to pressurize the Returning Officers in front of the candidates so that Returning Officers may not have any check on the People's Party candidates during voting'.⁵⁴⁸ It was also declared at a later enquiry that Hafiz Pirzada had 'directed the Returning Officers to keep the pace of polls slow at some polling stations while he instructed for faster pace of voting at polling stations of rural areas'.⁵⁴⁹ If this was not enough the person responsible for coordinating the administrative arrangements of the elections later testified:

[on election day] arrangements were made to collect and compile results in [the] Commissioner's Office. At about 11.00 p.m. there was silence and the communications of results was stopped by the [Returning Officers]. On contact they informed that the Home Secretary has stopped them to [sic] finalize or communicate the results.⁵⁵⁰

* * *

A large part of my election campaigning was done outside Karachi. I went wherever my services were required to support PNA candidates. As a result, I arrived in my home city barely a few days before the election date. By then a large number of our political workers and polling agents had already been arrested by the local administration under a host of fictitious charges under Defence of Pakistan Rules. Despite the daily harassment there was not the slightest sign of demoralization among our workers. The month and a half of open campaigning against the government, after a long five-year prohibition of free expression, had added fire to their spirit and steeled their resolve.

⁵⁴⁸ From a statement made by Muhammad Humayun Farshori, Assistant Commissioner Liaquatabad and Returning Officer for NA-186, *ibid.*, Annexure 308, p. A-881 to A-882.

⁵⁴⁹ Words of the CMLA's Inquiry Committee, *ibid.*, p. 308.

⁵⁵⁰ From a statement made by Mobashir Ahmed, Assistant Director, Local Government, *ibid.*, Annexure 56, p. A-165.

A few days prior to election day Saeed Haroon asked me to join him in leading a procession through his constituency in Lyari.⁵⁵¹ A large number of NDP workers and other PNA supporters gathered in Lyari, and formed a procession which then wound its way slowly through the main road in Lyari. It just so happened that the house of Abdul Sattar Gabol, Saeed Maroon's rival, was located on the main road and on the route of our march. As we approached it, we were suddenly met with a hail of gunfire from its rooftop. A handful of Pathan NDP supporters, who were carrying weapons as a protective measure against just such an incident, returned fire. A chaotic scene soon followed as hundreds of unarmed PNA supporters sought cover where none was offered. A number of people also began firing at us from the adjacent lanes. I refused to budge ground in the face of what I considered to be an act of cowardly aggression. Very soon a number of NDP workers encircled me and despite my protestations insisted on providing me with protection, leaving themselves exposed to the flying bullets. One person died and several were badly injured as a result of the unexpected skirmish. I later went to the Press Club to denounce the incident but the next day the newspapers decided to print only the PPP's and Abdul Sattar Gabol's doctored version of the whole affair.

When the election day finally arrived, it turned out to be a day of strife and turmoil in Karachi. In a pre-planned move, a large number of armed gangs of PPP *goondas* forcibly tried to take over chosen polling booths. It was their intention to prevent genuine voting from taking place and then, having asserted control over a polling booth, they openly indulged in bogus voting. This was more prevalent in the women's polling booths. I was witness to one such shameful incident when one of my polling officers, Najma Babar, a well-known journalist, was set upon by a group of foul-mouthed harridans from Lyari. They stoned her and physically mauled her in my presence. Facing these women I, along with my male supporters present on the scene, found ourselves quite helpless. And the police refused to render any assistance. That day my rival candidate, Malik Mir Hazar went about my constituency with a large group of armed ruffians, and forcibly, using gunfire in one incident closed down two polling stations located in the KMC Primary School (Miran Naka). Some of the adjacent shops were set ablaze to further frighten voters from approaching the polling area. These incidents were only illustrative of what took place in Karachi that day as the ruling party did its utmost to manipulate the polling results.⁵⁵²

While I had won my Karachi seat with an overwhelming majority, there was little to celebrate. When the results started to come on television that evening it became very

⁵⁵¹ Saeed was the youngest son of Sir Abdullah Haroon.

⁵⁵² The most brazen was Jam Sadiq Ali's attempt to compel the Returning Officer of Karachi NA-185 to accept, at 4.30 a.m. on the election morning, 7 March, a proposal of 'an already prepared election result' that would be supplied immediately to ensure the PPP candidate Ali Mahmood's victory. And this was a few hours before the polling even began. Luckily the Returning Officer saw sense and quickly rejected the instructions: *The Government White Paper on the Conduct of the General Elections March 1977*, op. cit., Annexure 310, p. A-894.

obvious at an early stage that an abominable charade had been played on all of us. Some of the results were so grotesquely skewed that no one could for a moment doubt that an act of gross deception had taken place. Even Bhutto, who later came on the television to acknowledge his 'resounding victory' looked furtive and ill at ease, quite belying his image as the newly triumphant 'Supreme and Undisputed Leader'. It had, probably, already occurred to him that he had hugely overstepped the limits of credulity.

The political 'genius' had far greatly over-reached himself, and this would now lead to his political downfall, and ultimately - unforeseen by all at the time - to a horrible and lonely death at the gallows of Rawalpindi Jail.

CHAPTER 9

Ziaul Haq and the Revival of Martial Law

When it became obvious to all that the PPP regime had indulged in massive rigging, the PNA and an immense section of the Pakistani public became enraged. The five long years of oppression had led to repressed feelings of frustration and anger, which were to soon explode on the streets. On the evening of election day large crowds had gathered in Karachi at public places to await the results. One could not help but notice the palpable fury of the assembled people as the doctored results began pouring in. A fire had been lit and a powder-keg of indignation was about to blow.

On 8 March, the day following the elections, the PNA leadership gathered at an emergency meeting at Lahore. There were stories of massive rigging in all the provinces. We received widespread evidence of forged ballot papers, illegal stuffing of ballot boxes, incredibly high incidences of rejected votes, forcible dispersal of voters from polling stations by the police in short, the regime had used every available illegal method to ensure its victory. The mood of the assembled PNA leadership was one of unrestrained fury. No one was prepared to accept the results of the 7 March elections. It was soon unanimously decided that all successful PNA candidates would resign their seats forthwith; the PNA would boycott the provincial elections scheduled for 10 March; and a call would be made for a nationwide protest strike on 11 March. The PNA call for the boycott of the provincial elections was soon endorsed by Qayum's Muslim League and NAP (Pakhtoonkhwa) of Balochistan.

Faced with an enraged Opposition, Bhutto took an aggressive stance. He publicly derided PNA's claims, terming them as baseless, and appealed 'to the mass of the electorate for the Provincial Assemblies to ... turn out for the vote with full vigor and enthusiasm'.⁵⁵³ Despite urgent instructions to the provincial administrations to ensure a good turn out on election day, on 10 March the polling stations remained largely deserted. A leading PPP cabinet minister later commented:

The PNA's mass popularity was proved on the 10th of March when the Provincial Assembly elections were scheduled and the polling booths lay deserted. That day it was only the People's Party candidates who were in the field. Complete boycott of the Provincial Assembly polls gave me a clear indication that the anti-government campaign launched by the PNA ... would prove very effective.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ Z. A. Bhutto, statement, 9 March 1977, *Pakistan Horizon* 30 (Second Quarter 1977), p. 164.

⁵⁵⁴ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 62.

On 11 March the nation-wide strike, called by the PNA, was extremely successful. Public demonstrations took place in all the major cities and towns of Pakistan. The authorities employed the police in an indiscriminate manner to enforce Section 144 and *lathi* charges and use of tear-gas were made the established norm. In my hometown of Rojhan there were mass arrests. Many of my relatives and supporters were detained and curfew was soon declared. Notably, it was the first imposition of curfew in all of Pakistan. Soon curfews were imposed in many other parts of the country.

I attended a further PNA general council meeting at Lahore at which we resolved to continue with the agitation. Our demands now included the immediate resignations of Bhutto and the Election Commission, and the holding of fresh elections under the supervision of the judiciary and the armed forces. It was decided that until these demands were met we would continue with a programme of non-stop agitation. The protest movement was to be launched on 14 March. Various leaders were assigned the task of leading the rallies in different parts of the country. Mufti Mahmood was to lead the movement in Peshawar, Asghar Khan in Rawalpindi, Begum Naseem Wali Khan in Lyallpur, Ahmed Shah Noorani in Hyderabad, and I was given the task for Karachi.

On 12 March Bhutto addressed the nation on television and radio and spoke for nearly ninety minutes constantly berating the PNA and insisting that the elections had been fair. Then he added that despite it all he was prepared to meet with the leaders of the PNA and discuss 'some questions' raised by them during the recent elections. The following day he wrote to Mufti Mahmood referring to the invitation that he had extended over television. The letter reached Mufti Mahmood in the early hours of 14 March, the day of the launch of the protest movement.

In Karachi, on 14 March, a number of PNA leaders, including Professor Ghafoor and Shah Faridul Haq, assembled at my residence in preparation for our day of protest. Then we left for Empress Market, from where we had planned to lead a protest march to Quaid-i-Azam's mausoleum. By the time we neared the vicinity of Empress Market a large procession had already formed behind us. As we approached Bohri Bazaar we were accosted by a very large contingent of police which began firing tear-gas shells at us. I was driving my jeep at the head of the procession and was accompanied by Professor Ghafoor Ahmed and Shah Faridul Haq who were sitting next to me. A tear-gas canister suddenly smashed the windscreen and landed beside me. The gas enveloped us and we found ourselves unable to breathe. We were dragged in a state of semi-consciousness from the vehicle and taken to a second storey flat in Bohri Bazaar.⁵⁵⁵ Wet cloth was placed on our eyes as we tried to recover our senses. Down below, the impassioned crowd had erupted and engaged the police in a furious street battle. Some of the protesters were picking up the tear-gas canisters' and hurling them back at the

⁵⁵⁵ My Toyota jeep was in the meanwhile confiscated by the police.

police, others were throwing stones and any other handy projectiles at the law enforcement authorities. The agitation had begun.

On that day similar demonstrations had been planned all over Pakistan, in the major cities of Lahore, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad and Quetta, as well as in smaller towns such as Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Sukkur, etc. At every location the police had responded with tear-gas and *lathi* charges. Instead of fleeing, as the government had hoped they might, the protesters spontaneously chose to respond by stone-throwing, fist-waving and slogan-chanting. Force was now being met with force on the streets of our towns and cities.

In light of the countrywide official mood of repression, the PNA rejected Bhutto's offer of a meeting. We all believed that Bhutto's idea of holding discussions was his typically deceitful method of defusing any crisis. Mufti Mahmood, in his reply to Bhutto's letter of 13 March, informed him that in his meeting with the co-leaders of the PNA, 'it was decided not to enter in a dialogue, the terms of which are not clear'.⁵⁵⁶ It is noteworthy that in the letter Mufti Mahmood addressed Bhutto as Chairman PPP; as a clear indication of our refusal to accept the result of the elections. Beside our lack of faith in Bhutto, he had, in all his public utterances, continued to insist that the elections were a 'settled matter' and could not be made a subject of any discussion. He had left no scope for genuine discussions, even if we had wanted them.

There was another general council meeting of the PNA at Lahore. By this time Mufti Mahmood had received another letter from Bhutto again calling for a meeting. This time Bhutto tried to be more conciliatory and intimated that he was prepared to listen to our complaints, at the same time insisting that the daily street demonstrations were dangerous and should be called off. No one in the PNA was prepared for a compromise. We had by now discovered that Rafique Ahmed Bajwa, the JUP vice-president and secretary-general of the PNA, had secretly met with Bhutto on 13 April. At first Bajwa mendaciously denied meeting with Bhutto but when confronted with undeniable evidence, he finally owned up, and rather spuriously claimed that he had met Bhutto as a representative of JUP and not of the PNA. We forced him to tender his resignation and in his place Professor Ghafoor was elected secretary-general of the PNA. Further, we were daily facing a barrage of invective in the government-controlled Press and there had been no let up in police brutality towards the public demonstrators. With our general consensus, Mufti Mahmood, in a lengthy reply dated 17 March, once more rejected Bhutto's offer of talks. The letter was blunt:

I regret to say that ... you have again avoided to clarify your stand regarding countrywide pre-planned rigging of general elections ... On 7th March 1977, the

⁵⁵⁶ Mufti Mahmood's letter to Z. A. Bhutto, 14 March 1977: quoted in Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 284.

country was subjected to a farce in the name of general elections ... [T]he administration made every endeavor to subvert the national will and to ensure a new lease of life for a leader and a government which had been overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate...Your administration once again proved how dishonest it is by announcing that 62 percent voters cast their votes on 10th March 1977. A more ridiculous announcement could not be made...fresh elections should be held by an administration and agencies who enjoy the confidence of the people and the PNA.⁵⁵⁷

The PNA's campaign of public protest continued without a rest. The government further exacerbated the situation by announcing on 17 March that the 'newly elected' members of the National Assembly would meet on 26 March to take oath. It was an act of clear provocation, considering that the Election Commission had, as yet, not even confirmed the results of the election. There was more to follow.

I returned to Karachi from the Lahore meeting on the evening of 17 March. In the early hours of the following morning the police surrounded my residence. At 2 a.m. I was arrested, along with Naseem Wali Khan, who had been staying as a house-guest. Begum Wali Khan was put on a plane and sent to Peshawar, while I was first taken to Karachi Central Jail, and then taken under custody by road to Sukkur Jail. The same day a number of other PNA leaders were similarly detained, including Shah Ahmed Noorani, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Mian Tufail, and Professor Ghafoor. Both Maulana Noorani and Professor Ghafoor were also brought to Sukkur Jail.

Caught in a fix Bhutto now hoped that by applying pressure upon us we might be more amenable to negotiations. He continued to correspond with Mufti Mahmood, who was intentionally left at liberty. On 19 March he wrote third letter to Mufti Mahmood. While insisting that his '...Party has secured an overwhelming vote of confidence from the electorate, which no false charge of rigging, no matter how strident and sweeping, can throw into dispute', Bhutto reiterated that he was open to all discussion connected with the electoral process just as long as it remained within 'constitutional' limits.⁵⁵⁸ His interpretation of 'constitutional limits' clearly precluded discussions on 'the validity of his prime-ministership, as Bhutto insisted that he would hold discussions as the Prime Minister and not as leader of the PPP. That very day the Director General of ISI had submitted an intelligence report to him with the assessment that he had no option but to hold fresh elections.⁵⁵⁹ Unable to accept the reality of the situation Bhutto seemed convinced that by using a mixture of coercion, guile and bluster he could manage his way out of the crisis, safeguarding his political position.

⁵⁵⁷ Mufti Mahmood's letter to Z. A. Bhutto, 17 March 1977, *Pakistan Horizon* 30 (Second Quarter 1977), pp. 165-6.

⁵⁵⁸ Z. A. Bhutto to Mufti Mahmood, 19 March 1977, *Pakistan Horizon* (Second Quarter 1977), pp. 166-7.

⁵⁵⁹ Stated by General Ghulam Jilani Khan (then Director General of Int Intelligence): General K. M. Arif. *Working with Zia, ibid.*, p. 68.

On 19 March, the day following our arrests, Karachi exploded into a frenzy of rage. The rioting that followed was so violent that the army had to be called in. A large section of Karachi-Korangi, Landhi, Baldia, Sher Shah, Golimar, Mangopir, Nazimabad, Orangi, Liaquatabad, Federal B Area, New Karachi, etc., were placed under immediate curfew. The army began patrolling the streets of Karachi with orders to shoot curfew breakers on sight. The unrest had, by now, also spread across Punjab as well. There were violent demonstrations in Lahore, Multan, Gujranwala and other smaller towns against the rigging of the elections. Apart from *lathi* charges and the use of tear-gas, the government had no answer.

On receipt of Bhutto's third letter Mufti Mahmood declared that he was unable to respond until he conferred with his jailed colleagues. On 21 March we were released from Sukkur Jail and flown to Lahore via Karachi to attend a PNA general council meeting called to discuss Bhutto's latest letter. The next morning, at Lahore, I received unexpected visitors at my sister's house, where I was staying. They were Sirdar Shaukat Hayat and his sister Begum Mahmooda Saleem, a well-regarded member of the NDP. They carried a personal message from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto asked them to tell me that I was an old friend and he had much affection for me. He now promised that he would withdraw the army from Balochistan, hold fresh elections in the province, and have the jailed NAP leaders tried in a normal court of law instead of in the special tribunal at Hyderabad. All he asked for in return was that I reach an understanding with him. I told Shaukat Hayat that it was now too late for individual settlements. Any commitment from me at this stage would mean a betrayal of my colleagues in the PNA. I said that it would be more appropriate if this offer was instead sent to the PNA general council.

Later that day, at the meeting of the PNA leadership at Muslim League House, I informed the others about the offer that I had received and my reply to it. We then discussed Bhutto's latest letter to Mufti Mahmood. After some deliberation the PNA high command stuck firmly to its previous stand: discussions could only take place once fresh elections were held under the independent supervision of the army and the judiciary. Thus Bhutto's third letter met with yet another rejection.

Soon after my return to Karachi we were all, not surprisingly, re-arrested. I was taken to Sukkur Jail where I once more found myself in the company of other PNA leaders, including Professor Ghafoor and Maulana Noorani. We were incarcerated together in a barrack building which had now been renamed as the special political ward. While we remained in jail the nation-wide public demonstrations continued without any sign of abatement. Confined in jail we were completely cut off from the outside world. The Urdu news broadcasts on BBC World Service kept us informed about the agitation that was continuing outside our prison walls.

The turmoil continued. The worst occurrence took place on 9 April at Lahore. A number of protest processions had planned to converge on the provincial assembly building where the newly 'elected' PPP members were to take oath. The authorities ordered the police and the FSF to prevent the demonstrators from reaching the building. They met with some success as only the main procession of protesters managed to get within the vicinity of the building. They were badly set upon by the police. Even the women demonstrators were seriously injured by a police contingent especially made up of recently conscripted prostitutes called the *Nath* force. In the ensuing rampage over thirty protesters were killed, and hundreds injured. It is generally believed that it was this incident that proved to be the turning point of the whole campaign against Bhutto. It fuelled a sense of outrage throughout the nation. Three Brigadiers involved in carrying out martial law duties in Lahore asked to be relieved of their duties, an action which caused them to be forcibly retired from the army.⁵⁶⁰

In the afternoon of 15 April I was informed by the superintendent of Sukkur Jail that I had special emissaries from Bhutto waiting to see me in his office. I was surprised to discover that my visitors were none other than my friends Mazhar Ali Khan and his wife Tahira.⁵⁶¹ They had flown on a special plane to try and persuade me to leave the PNA. Mazhar Ali Khan was not a strong supporter of Bhutto, but because of strong inclinations towards the political left, he made it clear that, given the present circumstances, he would much rather have Bhutto than the 'religious beards', as he chose to call them, managing the affairs of the country. He informed me that he and his wife had been flown to Hyderabad earlier that day to meet with the jailed NAP leaders. They had held discussions with Wali Khan, Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri, Arbab Sikandar Khalil, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and other senior NAP members on a new deal now offered by Bhutto. The offer included withdrawal of the army from Balochistan, fresh elections in the province and the inclusion of NDP in the national and provincial governments. All that NDP had to do was to withdraw from the PNA.

According to Mazhar Ali Khan, Wali Khan and the others had made it clear to him that as I was the head of NDP and directly involved in the movement against the government, it was best that I should be the one to make the decision. It appeared that only Bizenjo had voiced a dissenting opinion, by insisting that Bhutto's offer be accepted. Bizenjo, as I had by now gathered, had been largely ostracized by his colleagues. His social boycott was a result of a belief that he was in close touch with Bhutto through his regular and clandestine meetings in jail with Saied Ahmed Khan, the Chief of the PM's Security. He was no longer trusted by any of his colleagues and as such his views on Bhutto's offer seemed of little value. My reply to Mazhar Ali was much the same as that I had earlier given Shaukat Hayat. I told him that as the NDP had joined the PNA to put up a united struggle for the restoration of fundamental

⁵⁶⁰ The brigadiers were Ishtiaq Ali Khan, Said Muhammad, and Niaz Ahmed.

⁵⁶¹ Mazhar Ali Khan had been a respected editor of leading newspapers as *Dawn* and *The Pakistan Times*. At the time he was running his own magazine, *Viewpoint*.

freedoms, and I would not betray my colleagues. Needless to add, my friends Tahira and Mazhar Ali Khan flew back disappointed, having failed in their mission to break NDP away from the PNA.

By mid-April the ground had shifted from Bhutto completely and he was left grasping for his lost ascendancy. Much publicity was given internationally to the joint resignations of General Gul Hassan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan as ambassadors to Greece and Spain respectively on 13 April. They were soon to give extremely hostile press conferences in London against the Bhutto regime. They sent a letter to General Zia (with a copy to the PNA) demanding that he decline from accepting 'illegal and undemocratic' orders from a 'fascist' Bhutto. The actions of these two former military chiefs not only further tarnished Bhutto's carefully nurtured image abroad but caused him deep concern on the possible effect they might have on the armed forces. From the time of the nation-wide strike of 21 April the country had ground to a complete halt. PIA planes had ceased flying, trains had stopped running and the Karachi port was at a standstill.

Driven to desperation, on 17 April, Bhutto announced new Islamic measures. Alcohol, and all forms of gambling including horse racing were banned, night clubs and bars were closed down and Friday replaced Sunday as a holiday. He hoped that by this action he would regain lost ground among the masses. It was not to be. The real issue behind the protests was the call for fresh and fair elections. Not surprisingly the public agitation continued without abating. Sensing failure, three days later, Bhutto is reported to have complained to a general that he had taken these religious measures solely on General Zia's advice. According to Bhutto, Zia had assured him that once these measures were introduced the agitation would fade away.⁵⁶² Bhutto was grasping at straws.

On 21 April Bhutto held a meeting with the three military chiefs and shortly afterwards a partial state of martial law was imposed on Karachi division and the districts of Lahore and Hyderabad. Bhutto had voluntarily conceded part of his civilian power to the military - it was an open admission of defeat. The declaration of mini-martial law was subsequently challenged in the Lahore High Court. On 2 June a full bench of the High Court ruled that there was no scope in the Constitution for the imposition of martial law and that citizens could not be tried under the Army Act. The government appealed against this decision in the Supreme Court. In the meantime the imposition of martial law in Karachi brought brief calm to the city, but noticeably five people were shot dead on the very first day for violation of the curfew.

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⁵⁶² General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 69.

In jail my health had deteriorated. Perhaps it was due to the heat of summer that my face broke out into a severe rash. I was also suffering from a persistent backache. All the medical tests taken appeared normal but the backache increased in severity. The doctors suspected a slipped disc. Finally on 18 March I was moved Under escort to Karachi. Travelling by road, which proved to be an agonizing experience for me, we arrived at Karachi Jail at 1.30 a.m. and next morning, at 10 a.m. I was admitted to a hospital under police guard. Karachi's well-known orthopedic physician, Dr Z. Kazi, examined me. After a number of X-rays he confirmed that I was suffering from a slipped disc and his professional advice was that I rest for a number of weeks. In the prevailing circumstances it seemed to be a bit of a tall order. When my wife Souriya tried to get permission to meet with me at the hospital the normally gentlemanly Mustafa Jatoti refused, the fear of annoying Bhutto Sahib proved to be too strong.

In the end I managed four days rest in the hospital. Shortly after martial law was declared in Karachi on 21 April my wife contacted General Sadiq Abbasi, my school contemporary at RIMC, who had just been appointed the provincial Martial Law Administrator, to get authorization to visit me at the hospital. Without a moment's hesitation Sadiq Abbasi gave his permission for a pass to be issued and my wife was finally able to see me. At the time Karachi was subjected to violent upheavals. On 22 April a call had been made for a complete *paya jaam hartal* (a strike against all forms of vehicular movement) and a deathly hush descended over the city. In the early hours of 24 April I was taken from the hospital by the police, against medical advice, and made to board a plane bound for Rawalpindi. On arrival I was driven to the Sihala Rest House which had been converted into a jail. I discovered that most of my PNA colleagues were already there: they were Mufti Mahmood, Maulana Noorani, Professor Ghafoor, Mian Tufail, Maulana Jan Muhammad Abbasi, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and Begum Wali Khan - the last to arrive was Air Marshal Asghar Khan who was released from Kot Lakhpat Jail on 27 April. Upon my arrival I was met by my brother Mir Balakh Sher, who had been sent by Bhutto to persuade 'an old friend to listen to reason'. My brother just passed on the message to me as he had been told to and did not express any personal opinion either way.

On 28 April we were visited by the Saudi envoy, Sheikh Riaz al-Khatib, who asked us to try and reach a settlement with Bhutto without demanding fresh elections. He was to make several more visits in an attempt to convince us. The next day, 29 April, it was the turn of the Foreign Minister from the United Arab Emirates, Ahmed Khalifa Alswedi. It was obvious that their concern for Pakistan was genuine, but they were clearly out of touch with the reality of the position in Pakistani towns and streets and were looking at the situation from an altruistic foreign perspective.

On 30 April the current acting president of PNA, Pir Pagaro, who had not been imprisoned, was to lead a mammoth march to the doorstep of the Prime Minister House. It was meant to be the culmination of the much publicized 'long march' to

Rawalpindi by participants from all parts of Pakistan. Despite police blockades imposed all along their route, a large number of people managed to evade arrest and reach Rawalpindi. For reasons known only to himself, Pir Sahib decided to stay at the Intercontinental Hotel on the eve of the march, thus making it convenient for the authorities to find and detain him. Bhutto visited the interned Pir Pagaro in his hotel suite that evening and chatted with him for nearly an hour after which photographs of him being seen off by the Pir were taken by the Press. These photos were splashed across the front pages of the newspapers the following day causing bewilderment among the gathered protesters. Amid the confusion, not surprisingly, the march failed miserably. In Sihala prison camp I noted in my diary on 1 May: 'all of us are upset at Pir Pagaro...!'.

On the evening of 3 May as we were finishing our dinner at Sihala we were informed that Bhutto had arrived and was waiting in an adjoining bungalow with the desire of meeting with us. We briefly discussed the situation amongst ourselves. It became clear that no one wished to meet with Bhutto so Mufti Mahmood was selected for the task. Then duly authorized by his colleagues, Mufti Sahib once more sallied forth to lay down our conditions to Bhutto, but this time in person. His meeting with Bhutto went on for about an hour and a half, while the rest of us waited confined as we were in our quarters. When Mufti Mahmood returned, his eyes were glinting with humor and he chuckled loudly when he met us. 'He takes me for a complete fool!' he announced.

According to Mufti Mahmood when he entered the room he was met with a barrage of charts and maps with arrows marked all over them. Bhutto had brought with him the Director General of ISI, General Ghulam Jillani Khan. The general then proceeded to sternly lecture Mufti Mahmood on a sudden grave situation that had 'developed'. Pointing to the Afghanistan border on the map he asserted that Sirdar Daoud had massed his troops at Torkhum and Darra and was preparing to invade. Then he pointed to arrows leading towards our eastern border and said that the Indians had done the same and were preparing for an all-out attack in the vicinity of Lahore. Even the Iranis, they said, were following suit by assembling their army at Zahedan. After some three-quarters of an hour of this concocted inanity, Bhutto, who had been steadily watching Mufti Mahmood during this period trying to gauge his reaction, took over the conversation. Given the seriousness of the situation, Bhutto now added, it was vital in the interests of national security that the PNA do its patriotic duty and reach an understanding with the government. Mufti Mahmood gave a brief answer. He informed the two men that all that he and his PNA colleagues wanted was fresh elections.

The following day we issued a memorandum advising of the failure of the talks between PNA and Bhutto. Until and unless the issue of fresh elections was brought up, there seemed little point in holding discussions. On 5 May PNA's 33-point demands were made public at a press conference which Pir Pagaro gave on our behalf. Our

foremost demand was of course fresh elections held under independent supervision. Among the others NDP had contributed two demands. The first being withdrawal of troops from Balochistan and the other was the immediate restoration of the rights of the workers. It was ironical that the man who had once championed the cause of the urban poor had over a period of time had completely restricted the rights of the labor unions.

Living in close proximity to some of our religious party leaders, it was hard not to become aware of the schisms that divided them. On the very first evening Mufti Mahmood got up to lead *maghrib* prayers. In customary Islamic fashion the rest of us lined up behind him, but not Maulana Noorani. Announcing that he refused to pray behind a *Deobandi*, he walked away to pray elsewhere. Only his close political ally, Asghar Khan, opted to follow the *Barelvi* maulana. It was disheartening that even in crisis we clung to such narrow-minded practices. The fact that the PNA unity held for such a long period was indeed remarkable.

One fine day Sirdar Abdul Qayum descended upon us supposedly as a fellow prisoner, but no one believed this. We all suspected that he had been sent to spy on us. Undoubtedly in the circumstances it was logical for Bhutto to try and find out all he could about our activities and deliberations, how we got along together, and our weaknesses and strengths. While we all avoided Abdul Qayum he must have been a source of some useful information to the PPP regime.

Then we were visited by Dr. Zafar Niazi, Bhutto's dentist and ardent loyalist, who came ostensibly to check our teeth. The following day Nasrullah Khan donned his fez and gaily sauntered to a waiting official car which was there supposedly to take him to the dentist. Later we discovered that he had gone surreptitiously to meet with Bhutto. What galled the rest of us was the secrecy that was involved. Nasrullah Khan never mentioned anything about his clandestine meetings to us. Naturally, in the circumstances, trust became the first victim. I never came to know exactly what information was passed on to Bhutto or his intelligence agencies by Nasrullah Khan or Sardar Abdul Qayum, but a general impression had been formed by Bhutto and his colleagues that the PNA hard-liners consisted of Asghar Khan, Maulana Noorani and myself.

On the lighter side of things there was an amusing incident which is worth recalling. It took place on 11 May when my eldest son came to visit me. My back had been causing me great discomfort over the past few weeks and my family were concerned about my welfare. Sherazam, then a student at Karachi's Institute of Business Administration had flown to Rawalpindi. Borrowing a car from Wali Khan's son Sangeen, Sherazam had driven to Sihala. When he was preparing to leave the car would not budge. It had to be push-started. While Sherazam sat in the driver's seat the car was pushed by the whole PNA leadership consisting of Mufti Mahmood, Asghar Khan, Professor Ghaffoor,

Maulana Noorani and myself. With all the Opposition 'heavyweights' behind it the car had no option but to start immediately!

As noted in my diaries, Bhutto and Mufti Mahmood had four meetings. The last two took place on 7 and 11 May. On the earlier meeting my diary entry reads: 'Bhutto remains unwilling to call for new elections'.⁵⁶³ At the last meeting no discussions really took place. All Mufti Mahmood did was give a brief answer on our behalf: 'Our three basic demands must be met. Until then no commitment can be given and no negotiations can be commenced'.⁵⁶⁴ A letter addressed to Bhutto was then drafted on our behalf by Asghar Khan and signed by Mufti Mahmood. In the letter we bluntly expressed our view that the talks between Mufti Mahmood and Bhutto were getting nowhere and there was no point in continuing with them. In the draft I noticed that Asghar Khan had inadvertently addressed Bhutto as prime minister of Pakistan. In my view, the rigged elections that had been popularly rejected, did not accord anyone the right to that title. My suggestion was accepted and Bhutto's designation was amended to read 'Chairman People's Party'.

Our demand for fresh elections had recently been strongly reinforced by a belated Press statement of the Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Sajjad Ahmed Jan. He had for once categorically stated on record that the elections had been rigged on such a vast scale that looking into individual constituency complaints would not solve the matter. Fresh elections, he insisted, were the only answer.⁵⁶⁵ His remarks were only published in a Gujarati language newspaper which because of its language and limited localized circulation managed to evade Bhutto's ever vigilant team of censors.

On 13 May in an unexpected move Bhutto announced his plan to hold a referendum on his continuance in power. There was no provision in the Constitution allowing for such a referendum, but Bhutto arranged for an amendment to be rushed through in the 'PPP Assembly'. He now desperately pinned his hopes on using the referendum as a solution and had approached General Zia to get his endorsement. According to Kausar Niazi, General Zia had evidently replied, 'I'll be able to sell [the referendum] to my jawans'.⁵⁶⁶

At Sihala we knew that our rejection of dialogue would result in an imminent backlash. Once plans had been made for the referendum, it was not long in coming. On the morning of 13 May we were informed that visitors would no longer be allowed. That night we dispersed to various jails, with the 'hardliners' getting the worst of the deal. Only Mufti Mahmood continued to stay in the Sihala rest house. Asghar Khan was moved to Sahiwal Jail, Noorani to Jacobabad, and I ended up in Mianwali. As the temperatures in Jacobabad and Mianwali from mid-May onwards often soar above 50°

⁵⁶³ Diary note of 7 May 1977.

⁵⁶⁴ Diary note of 11 May 1977.

⁵⁶⁵ *Millat* (Gujarati), Karachi, 6 May 1977.

⁵⁶⁶ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 147.

Centigrade, it would seem that Maulana Noorani and I had been 'chosen' for special treatment. On the other hand, after only three days in jail, on 17 May, Nasrullah Khan was returned to the relative comfort of Sihala rest house.

Bhutto who himself spent a brief sojourn in Mianwali Jail in 1968, but in November when the temperatures are at least comfortable, said:

I was confined in an old cell full of rats and mosquitoes ... the charpoy [bed] was tied to a chain. There was an adjoining little room meant for toilet purposes. But it was so dirty it was repulsive to enter ... The food consisted of two *chappaties* made of red wheat with *dal* which had stones in it or two tiny pieces of meat. A strong light shone for 24 hours throughout my stay there making my sleep at night extremely difficult.⁵⁶⁷

After confiscating my radio, shaving kit, diary and all writing materials I was placed in solitary confinement in a cell with bars on all four sides, rather resembling a cage for animals. Unlike Bhutto I was neither allocated a charpoy and instead had the hard cement floor for a bed, nor was I provided access to a lavatory. I was only given four simple items, two towels and two buckets. One bucket was provided with water and the other was to serve as a lavatory. In the unbearable heat of May - there being no fan - at night I would wet both towels; one I would use as a 'mattress' and the other, as a covering sheet. And, of course like Bhutto before me, I had a 'strong light' to keep me company day and night.

The jail superintendent visited me and somewhat gleefully informed me that mine was a historical cell, and many luminaries had been imprisoned within its confined space including Mahatma Gandhi in the 1930s, Abdul Ghaffar Khan after Partition and more recently in 1971, by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In my condition I did not find this information at all interesting, so I tersely told him to put a commemorative plaque there and be done with it. To my mind Bhutto's back was now against the wall. He was determined not to resign and was prepared to do anything to cling to power. Now anything was possible. So, I steeled my resolve and tried to prepare for whatever fate lay in store for me. Though my backache had by now become agonizing, I realized that I would have to bear with it and whatever else came my way. Rather than take things passively, I decided to go on a hunger strike to protest my conditions.

On the sixth day of the hunger strike I experienced severe chest pains that almost rendered me unconscious. At that time there was little chance of getting any medical attention. Later, when I described what had happened to a cardiologist, he confirmed that I had suffered a heart attack. Recovering slowly I found myself severely depleted

⁵⁶⁷ Z A. Bhutto, affidavit in Lahore High Court. 5 February 1969: Z. A. Bhutto, *Politics of the People*, vol. 2. *Awakening the People*, Rawalpindi, Pakistan Publications (no date).

and decided to forego my hunger strike. The temperature had by now become quite intolerable because of a heat wave. That night as I lay uncomfortably on my damp towel under the glaring light-bulb and trying to sleep, I sensed someone watching me from the other side of the bars. I got up to see who it was and was surprised to see the jail superintendent standing there all by himself.

He seemed very perturbed for some reason but I just stared at him with suspicion. Then strangely, he broke down. 'As a Jail Superintendent', he said, 'I've done some awful things in my life but I have my limits. Bhutto Sahib personally rings me up almost on a daily basis to see if I have broken you yet. But today he gave me orders which, even though i am scared of him, I can't obey'. Then giving me a stricken look he added, 'Believe me, even I have a conscience. I have applied for leave and am taking off tomorrow. I'll face the consequences of my decision but my mind is made up'. Then he warned me. 'The deputy jail superintendent is a vicious man, I don't know what will happen when I'm gone'. Shocked by what I suspected was a threat of depravity I informed him as coldly as I could. 'I am a man of honor. I suggest you inform Bhutto, your deputy or whoever else for that matter, if anyone forcibly indulges in anything indecent with me I will kill myself. Locked in the cage and in a frail state because of my recent hunger strike and heart ailment, I could only hope for sanity to prevail.

By now, it appears, Bhutto had become extremely wary of the army. Earlier he had begun having frequent meetings with General Zia and his corps commanders, believing in his own ability to beguile them on to his side. He had sold them the idea of holding a referendum. But once PNA had announced that it would boycott such a move even the army now changed its mind and opposed it. According to one source Zia is said to have informed Bhutto, 'Sir, the idea of holding a referendum won't work. It does not satisfy our jawans. And...even the Opposition has rejected the idea'.⁵⁶⁸ Without the army supporting his referendum Bhutto was left with little option but to restart his discussions with Mufti Mahmood and the PNA.

The army was now showing signs of restiveness, which only added to Bhutto's alarm. At an earlier meeting the Chief of General Staff, General Abdullah Malik, made some remarks about the army's responsibility for restoring order in the country. In Bhutto's presence, General Malik was sharply rebuked by General Faiz Ali Chishti, Corps Commander Rawalpindi, who loudly and openly admonished him by saying. 'You are not a Corps Commander, what do you know about our difficulties! Why should we fire? Political problems should have political solutions'. Chishti was followed by two of the other corps commanders present, Generals Sarvar Khan and Arbab Jehanzeb, who also heatedly denounced General Malik's views.⁵⁶⁹ According to Kausar Niazi who had witnessed these proceedings:

⁵⁶⁸ Kausar Niazi, *Last Days of Premier Bhutto*, op. cit., p. 153,

⁵⁶⁹ Quoted by Kausar Niazi who was present at the meeting: *ibid.*, p. 1

After this meeting...[Bhutto] appeared fairly upset; anxiety was writ large on his face. That was the first occasion that the generals had spoken in this strain in his presence. Actually, it was only after this episode that Mr. Bhutto started thinking seriously about having negotiations with the PNA; the importance of such an exercise had now dawned upon him.⁵⁷⁰

On about 25 May Sirdar Abdul Qayum, now acting openly as Bhutto's emissary, had flown in by a special plane to visit me in jail.⁵⁷¹ At first I refused to meet with him but then he sent me a letter from Begum Wali Khan that he was carrying. In the letter Naseem Wali Khan had requested me quite earnestly to meet with Abdul Qayum as he was bringing an important message. I then met him, reluctantly, in the deputy superintendent's office. He told me that he had already met with Asghar Khan, Maulana Noorani and Professor Ghafoor, and had now come to inform me that 'we are close to reaching an understanding'. He mentioned that on 17 May the Saudi envoy, Sheikh Riaz al Khatib, had called on Mufti Mahmood imploring him to reach an understanding with Bhutto. This had then led to a visit on 18 May by Bhutto and his advisers to Sihala where they had met with Mufti Mahmood and Nasrullah Khan.⁵⁷² At the meeting Bhutto had expressed his assent to a fresh election provided the PNA agreed to discuss the issue at 'a negotiating table'. I told him that there was no chance of any understanding as far I was concerned as long as we remained incarcerated. Within a day or two I was flown to Karachi and lodged in Central Jail. I was finally admitted to hospital on 1 June. On 2 June I was officially released and the police guards at the hospital were recalled. The following day, 3 June, negotiations between the PPP regime and the PNA had begun in Islamabad. The PNA had called for a temporary halt to the agitation. Very soon a state of uneasy calm spread through the country as everyone awaited the results of the negotiations.

While we were in jail communications between Mufti Mahmood and Bhutto had continued through the mediation of the Saudi Ambassador. Having sent most of the PNA leadership to jail Bhutto had sent Nawabzada Nasrullah back to Sihala. The strategy had worked. Mufti Mahmood, with Nasrullah Khan now as his sole adviser, had virtually dropped the demand for Bhutto's resignation as a pre-condition to negotiations and a three-man PNA negotiating team had already been 'preselected', after taking Bhutto's objections to the presence of 'hard-liners' into account. The team from the PNA consisted of Mufti Mahmood, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and Professor Ghafoor Ahmed. The PPP was to be represented by Bhutto, Hafiz Pirzada and Kausar Niazi.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵⁷¹ As I was unable to keep a diary in Mianwali jail, it is hard to work the dates for this period with any accuracy.

⁵⁷² Bhutto was accompanied by Hafiz Pirzada, Kausar Niazi and Mir Afzal Khan.

When the PNA leadership met once more we made it clear to the negotiating team that it had no authority to accept any term or condition of the proposed settlement without prior approval of the general council. While this clearly hampered the team's ability at the negotiating table we in the NDP, along with most of the Opposition parties, were not prepared to concede any delays in the call for fresh elections. It was at the cost of hundreds of lives and sacrifices made by hundreds of thousands of people that we had been able to reach a position of nullifying the results of the 7 March election. We did not wish to lose in negotiation what we had so expensively obtained after waging no less than a public war against the regime.

There were two other issues of great importance to me. The first was of course Balochistan. After four long years of personally putting up with Bhutto's lies, prevarication and deceit on the issue, I believed it was time for us to force an immediate return of the army to its barracks and demand compensation for all the families that had suffered as a result of the army action. The other issue was that of the jailed NAP leadership, Wali Khan, Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri and a host of other Opposition politicians who had been unjustly dubbed as 'traitors' through a parody of judicial process. Bhutto had personally concocted the Hyderabad Conspiracy Trial and it was time for him to expunge his misdeeds.

The first session of the negotiations was held on the afternoon of 3 June. The initial demands of the PNA were largely related to the release of thousands of political prisoners who were being held in prison for opposing the regime and upholding issues such as lifting martial law, ending of Press and media censorship, and compensating families of the recent victims of police/FSF violence. The second session was held on the morning of 6 June when discussions began in earnest on the issue of fresh elections. The negotiations continued on an almost daily basis often in an atmosphere of mistrust and tension. The underlying reason for these misgivings was the fact that while the PPP team talked about reconciliation thousands of PNA supporters continued to languish in imprisonment and more continued to be arrested. Even those being released by the courts would often find themselves re-arrested on an assortment of different charges. The PNA team felt that there was a great discrepancy between the words and deeds of the regime. Their complaints to Bhutto were met with empty reassurances and what they perceived to be delaying tactics. Nevertheless the PNA team was committed to finding a solution.

After the odd deadlock, several disagreements, a proposal and a counter-proposal and numerous sessions and counter-sessions, a compromise of sorts was reached between the two negotiating teams. By 15 June an accord had been agreed upon by both sides on the following terms:

- fresh elections would be held soon (the date had not yet been agreed upon):

- the army would be withdrawn from Balochistan;
- all special tribunals would be shut down (with particular reference to the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case);
- all political prisoners would be released;
- all constitutional amendments in contravention of basic human rights would be rendered null and void;
- all censorship of the Press would be stopped;
- equal time would be provided to both the PPP and the PNA
- the state of emergency would be lifted on the day the agreement was signed.

Furthermore to ensure that the new elections were held without fear of any tampering a ten-member Implementation Council, with five members from each side, was to be established to ensure that the agreement was properly implemented. It was decided that any disputes within the council would be settled by a panel of three Supreme Court judges. The final form of the agreement was to be drafted by Professor Ghafoor Ahmed and Hafiz Pirzada, assisted by a team of legal experts. Finally, it was also agreed that the agreement would be signed by Bhutto and Mufti Mahmood by 20 June 1977.

On the evening of 15 June Bhutto informed Mufti Mahmood that he would be retiring to Larkana for three or four days for 'a well-earned rest'. Mufti Sahib, who believed that finalizing the agreement would take three days or so, did not think Bhutto's presence in Islamabad during the interim period was necessary. In fact Mufti Mahmood went on to publicly announce that the agreement would be signed very soon. On 18 June Bhutto unexpectedly flew off on a whirlwind trip of the Middle East leaving behind a very stunned Mufti Mahmood. A day prior to his departure he had appointed Ghulam Mustafa Khar as his special adviser. These two actions were in reality a deliberately provocative red rag to the Opposition.

When the terms of the accord reached by both negotiating teams were presented before the PNA leadership, an objection was voiced by our legal advisers. They said there was an absence of legal protection in the event Bhutto decided to back out of his commitments. Therefore it was vital, they insisted, if the terms of the accord were provided with some form of constitutional protection which could if necessary be upheld in the courts. When Professor Ghafoor raised this issue with Hafiz Pirzada, he was met with a firm refusal. The following day Hafiz Pirzada antagonized us further by

publicly announcing that the PNA would have no say in the appointment of provincial governors. This was a point which had earlier been raised by the PNA, and it had been agreed by the PPP that the matter would be left for the proposed Implementation Council to decide.

I had known Zulfikar All Bhutto for some twenty-three years - within months of his taking residence in Pakistan in November 1953. I had seen him progress from a despondent political aspirant unable to contest a provincial assembly election, to a civilian martial law administrator and president. Throughout this period Bhutto had openly scorned those who favored the straightforward approach. To him, lying, double-dealing and deceit were normal means of attaining and keeping power. His evident acceptance of new elections was now belied by his unexpected trip abroad. It was a clear indication that mischief was afoot. The appointment of the much-detested Khar as his special adviser and Hafiz Pirzada's marked obstinacy in dealing with subsequent issues, were revealing footprints of Bhutto's further designs.

I had received a message from Bhutto through Professor Ghafoor who had been meeting him during the negotiations. Bhutto wished to privately meet with Begum Wali Khan and me, promising that as soon as law and order was re-established he would withdraw the army from Balochistan and bring an end to the Hyderabad Tribunal. As had become my practice in reinforcing PNA's continuing unity, I brought this message to the attention of the other members of the Alliance leadership. Their advice, a unanimous no, was in keeping with my own views. I had become convinced, by now, that for Bhutto the negotiations had simply been a means of buying more time. He now hoped that the delay would bring about a rupture within the alliance caused by differing views among the PNA leadership - something which he had covertly been encouraging. This would then provide Bhutto with an opportune moment to back out of his commitments. And by this time, if his strategy had worked., the Opposition would have lost its momentum and would prove incapable of restarting the agitation. It was a game of brinkmanship that Bhutto believed he excelled at.

In the midst of these uncertainties we were alarmed by reports that Bhutto had been arming his PPP supporters throughout Pakistan. This issue had been raised earlier by our negotiating team directly with Bhutto and we had demanded that all recently issued arms licenses be revoked. There was every indication that Bhutto was planning to counter the PNA agitation by use of armed PPP members set on a killing spree. It seems that the army had also received similar information on Bhutto's intentions.⁵⁷³

During one of the PNA meetings held at Sihala, Asghar Khan revealed some further disturbing news. As some of us had recently been warned about our host, Arshad Choudhry, being a paid informer of an intelligence agency, Asghar Khan, suspecting

⁵⁷³ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 80.

that our meeting room was bugged,⁵⁷⁴ insisted upon taking a number of us outside to reveal some vital information that he had received from an intelligence source.⁵⁷⁵ According to this information Bhutto had decided to deal with the PNA's 'hard-liners' once and for all. He had now concocted an ingenious plan by which he would sacrifice the lives of Kausar Niazi and Ghulam Mustafa Khar. It was planned that the two would soon become victims of an assassination plan. In retaliation an 'enraged and out of control' PPP mob, seeking vengeance for the death of the two leaders, would then proceed to kill Asghar Khan, Shah Ahmed Noorani and myself.

The assassination plan may seem a bit farfetched to some, but even Kausar Niazi, one of the plot's two sacrificial victims, believed in its authenticity.⁵⁷⁶ A frantic Bhutto would have done anything within his means to maintain his hold on power. It must be recalled that these were very desperate days for him indeed. I am convinced that along with arming a large number of PPP rabble, getting rid of a handful of irritating PNA leaders presented an agreeable solution to Bhutto's anxieties at a time when his political grip lay in tatters before him. General Arif writes about a very revealing episode which took place in the third week of June.

... General Zia expressed his apprehension to [Bhutto] that, if the agitation did not end, it could erode the army's discipline and cause divisions in its ranks. This would be a disaster for the army and for the country. Mr. Bhutto sensed the mood. Employing his charm, he said, 'you are my brother and I trust you.' He asked General Zia not to get unduly worried as the government did not plan to employ the army in a hurry again. He went on to confide that he had taken 'other measures' to deal with the PNA agitation [the emphasis is mine]. That statement rang an alarm bell in General Zia's mind.⁵⁷⁷

* * *

After Hafiz Pirzada's refusal to consider constitutional guarantees for the accord and his subsequent statement on the provincial governors, the next meeting between him and Professor Ghafoor held on 20 June ended in complete failure. Faced with an unrepentantly aggressive Pirzada, Professor Ghafoor walked out of the meeting and announced that no further meetings could take place until Bhutto returned to Pakistan.

⁵⁷⁴ According to this information the Intelligence Bureau was privy to everything discussed at PNA's meetings. Even the cost of the tea and snacks being provided to us was being met by the said government agency. Very soon afterwards the venue of PNA meetings was changed.

⁵⁷⁵ Asghar Khan's daughter was married to the son of the former head Intelligence Bureau.

⁵⁷⁶ On 22 April 1978 Kausar Niazi admitted that Bhutto had planned to him and Khar murdered: Lt.-General Faiz Ali Chishti, *Betrays of Another Kind*, PCL Publishing House, Rawalpindi. 1990, p. 157.

⁵⁷⁷ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 80.

By now the atmosphere at the PNA council meetings was one of deep mistrust towards Bhutto. We had been assured by Bhutto that the two-man committee of Professor Ghafoor and Hafiz Pirzada would quickly draft the required agreement, but now the attitude of Pirzada and Kausar Niazi was proving to be anything but cooperative. Nevertheless, we were determined to move ahead and our team of lawyers put together a draft agreement. In the document substantial powers had been given to the proposed Implementation Council and it also included a detailed list of amendments that would have to be made to the Constitution to give it the much desired legal status. On the day of Bhutto's return to Pakistan, on 23 June, our negotiating team handed over the PNA draft agreement. At the next meeting of the two teams on 25 June instead of discussing the terms of the PNA draft agreement Bhutto presented Mufti Mahmood with an alternate PPP-drafted agreement. It appeared that Bhutto had serious objections over the proposed Implementation Council being given the powers of a super-government.

That morning at the PNA's general council meeting saw a heated debate over the differences between the two draft agreements. Asghar Khan insisted that we should stick to our original draft and be done with it, but the majority did not wish to take such an extreme stance. It was decided that the PNA legal team would prepare a new amended version to its earlier draft, making it more acceptable to Bhutto and his team.

The newspapers of 26 June carried a vitriolic statement by Ghulam Mustafa Khar who while addressing PPP workers at Rawalpindi, announced that 'if PNA knows how to run a movement, the PPP knows how to destroy a movement... Violence will be met with violence'.⁵⁷⁸ That very day a serious armed clash took place between PNA supporters and PPP workers at Lahore. It seemed as if our fears were being proven right.

On 27 June there was a lengthy meeting of the PNA general council which lasted most of the day. There was much cause for concern among the Opposition leadership. The PPP had still not released many of the politically detained prisoners, and were deliberately confusing the issue by providing incorrect figures.⁵⁷⁹ Further, much to our consternation, new criminal cases were being registered against our workers. We had also received information that large scale transfers were taking place in the police and the civil administration, and anyone suspected of PNA sympathies was being sidelined into obscure and powerless positions. At the same time we could not help but notice that the Press statements of PPP leaders like Khar and Dr Ghulam Hussain, were inciting their workers to take up arms against the PNA. Some members of the leadership were demanding that we desist from further negotiations and go back to the streets and restart our agitation. In the end the moderates prevailed.

⁵⁷⁸ Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, *Phir Martial Law Aagya* (Urdu). Jang Publishers Press, Lahore, June 1988. p. 223.

⁵⁷⁹ A large majority of the PNA workers had been arrested on fraudulent charges of criminal acts as such buffalo theft, etc. Bhutto and his team insisted on treating these people as 'criminals' rather than political detainees.

It was decided by the PNA general council that the newly amended draft agreement be handed to the PPP without delay. Mufti Mahmood was given the authority to sign the agreement provided the PPP accepted it without further changes - but it was made clear that in the event of even minor further amendments, the document could only be ratified by the general council. But that night Hafiz Pirzada telephoned Professor Ghafoor and informed him that the PPP was not willing to even receive the document. He referred to a Press report printed earlier that day that stated that the PNA was planning to present the document on an 'accept it or reject it' basis. Calling it an ultimatum, Pirzada issued a Press statement insisting that he would not receive the document even if it was sent by mail.⁵⁸⁰

The following morning, 28 June, an angered PNA general council decided that if the PPP continued to refuse to accept PNA's amended draft then we were left with little choice but to announce a restart of the agitation. Mufti Mahmood was asked to contact Bhutto and advise him of the position. After a brief discussion with Bhutto over the telephone it was agreed that Pirzada would accept the draft, which he did at 9 a.m. the next morning.

By 29 June the PNA determined that there remained only two issues of substance between the two parties, the first being the date of the dismissal of assemblies and the holding of fresh elections, and the other the powers to be given to the new Implementation Council. Mufti Mahmood spoke to Bhutto over the telephone telling him that the matter of the Implementation Council needed careful deliberation and reminded him of his commitment to release all political prisoners and cancel recently issued arms licenses - issues which were creating serious misgivings among the PNA leadership.

At the next session of negotiations, held on 1 July, Bhutto pulled a surprise out his hat by arranging a briefing given by General Zia to the PNA negotiation team in front of Chief of Joint Staff and the Air Force and Navy chiefs. During the two hour briefing Zia raised four objections to the PNA demands. Despite the peace prevailing in Balochistan, he said, it was too early to ask for a complete withdrawal of troops because neighboring Afghanistan was engaged in training and arming 'separatists'. Then he pointed out that including Azad Kashmir in the PNA-PPP confrontation was not in the interest of Pakistan's national security. Zia also advised that it was not suitable for the proposed Implementation Council to take charge of the armed forces. Finally, and rather vicariously he insisted that it would not be suitable to interfere in the Hyderabad Conspiracy case. For all intents and purposes he behaved as if he had been tutored by Bhutto to present these contrary views.

⁵⁸⁰ Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, *Phir Martial Law Aagya* (Urdu), op. cit. p. 225.

In response Mufti Mahmood stated that it had never been the PNA's objective to place the defence forces under the Implementation Council. The sole purpose of that body was to ensure that future elections were held in a totally fair manner. Powers had been given to it so that it was strong enough to resist any possible interference in the election process. As far as Kashmir was concerned, Mufti Mahmood added that he did not wish to see any concern of Pakistan's national security compromised. Then much to my later disappointment, the PNA conceded two valuable points: as far as Balochistan was concerned, he stated, the army withdrawal need not be immediate but could take place over a reasonable period of time. He failed to mention to Zia and the others that the sole cause of the Balochistan problem was sitting before them, Bhutto himself. The other grave error Mufti Mahmood made was that he agreed to withdraw PNA's demand calling for the end of the Hyderabad Tribunal. He had no authority to do that.

At the second session of the negotiations which began at 8 p.m. that evening, Bhutto strategically pressurized the elderly Mufti Mahmood into discussing and debating every issue point by point until 6 a.m. the following morning. It was a tactical move to wear the PNA negotiating team down to a level of least resistance, thereby making them concede points which they may not have done given a more normal situation. Nevertheless Bhutto was well aware that the negotiating team had no authority to make any binding agreement on any of the issues. That authority rested only with the PNA general council.

On the evening of 2 July there was a heated debate at the meeting of the PNA general council when we learnt of some of the concessions that had been made early that morning. I was particularly aggrieved by the concession made on the Hyderabad Tribunal issue. Mufti Mahmood made it clear that he had wanted to keep the PNA in good favor with the military. In his opinion it was not feasible to offend both the PPP and the army at same time at a crucial juncture such as this. In Pushto Mufti Mahmood told Begum Wali Khan that she should refrain from insisting upon her husband's release from Hyderabad Jail, otherwise Wali Khan would suffer the same fate as Bangladesh's Mujibur Rahman, who, along with most of the members of his family, had been slaughtered in 1975 by angry young army officers. Upon hearing this Begum Wali Khan became visibly upset and walked out from the meeting. Later, on my insistence, Mufti Mahmood apologized to Begum Wali Khan for his thoughtless remarks.

After the majority decision it was then decided in council that the draft of the accord should be examined by our legal team. Our legal experts were delegated the task of ensuring that all safeguards for future fair elections were covered. The following day, 3 July, they came up with the following nine points:

1. The Implementation Council must be given full constitutional protection.

2. Any change in governors could only be made by the consensus of both parties.
3. The agreement should be made between the PPP and PNA (i.e. not between Mufti Mahmood as President of PNA and Bhutto as Prime Minister).
4. Appointment of the Election Commission was to be made by consensus of both parties.
5. FSF should be placed under the control of the Army GHQ.
6. All laws that require to be amended or altered will have to be amended and altered before the agreement can be signed.
7. The 'Removal of Difficulties' Clause to be re-instated.
8. All amendments to the Constitution must be made and approved by the PNA before the agreement is signed.
9. Special tribunal cases should be tried according to laws used in normal courts.

As the meeting continued, Asghar Khan, who had also been infuriated at the turn of events, demanded a renewal of agitation. By now emotions were running high and he was supported in his views by both Maulana Noorani and myself.

By now I had developed a complete distrust of Bhutto and found it difficult to accept that he would genuinely concede anything. At this juncture the negotiations seemed to me to be a charade which would lead us nowhere. Despite my hardened feelings when it came to a vote, the moderates who wished to continue with the negotiations were found to be in a majority. Bound by principles of democracy I had to adhere to the majority decision and go along with it. Even the more militant Asghar Khan presented an appearance of complete unity to the Press the following morning.

* * *

Bhutto suffered from a common failing. He had become blinded by power. According to Kausar Niazi, he contacted Bhutto on the morning of 3 July with news of a possible army take-over. The information had been provided to him in person by the ever-resourceful Sirdar Abdul Qayum. Bhutto refused to meet with Abdul Qayum telling Niazi that 'these people only look for an excuse to have an interview with me'.⁵⁸¹ Even

⁵⁸¹ Kausar Niazi, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

at this late stage Bhutto seemed to have been mesmerized by his own sense of grandeur. Later that day General Jillani, the head of ISI, and Rao Rashid, the newly promoted Director of the Intelligence Bureau, informed Bhutto that the army's patience had been exhausted and it was planning to act very soon. In their presence Bhutto rang up each corps commander and subtly enquired 'if all was well and whether anything unusual was happening ... [and was left] no wiser after the conversation'.⁵⁸²

At 10 p.m. on 3 July Mufti Mahmood, Professor Ghafoor Ahmed and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan handed over the additional nine-points to Bhutto insisting that these were technical points and did not materially affect the accord that they had reached upon the previous morning. Bhutto appearing amiable glanced at the document and informed the PNA team that he would have to consult his team in the adjoining room. We only have Kausar Niazi's version of what took place next.⁵⁸³ He states:

Glancing over the papers, and reading over the points to us, Mr. Bhutto asked for our opinion. 'There's nothing new in these points,' I said, 'nor would they add anything to the clauses of the accord. These are only some points of a technical nature and I think we should accept them so that we can sign the accord today and not allow any deadlock'.

[Bhutto] now looked towards Hafeez [Pirzada]. 'Sir,' he said, 'there's no need of this. Let them bend; they claim contacts with the Generals...there's nothing of the sort ... the Generals are with you. The fact is that their own bubble has burst, that's why they are talking like this ... let them talk.'

When I insisted once again that the accord should be signed the same day, [Bhutto] spoke up. 'Why do you worry, friend,' he said, 'we'll accept all this, but where's the hurry! If we accept straightaway they'll think we are on a weak footing. They should wait for a while'.⁵⁸⁴

Having consulted with Pirzada and Niazi, Bhutto returned to the PNA team and told them that he needed time for further consultations. According to Professor Ghafoor, Bhutto's attitude appeared quite accommodating throughout their brief meeting, and in particular, there was a complete absence of hostility on his part. But only two hours later, his stance hardened dramatically. Addressing a Press conference at midnight 3/4 July, Bhutto lambasted the PNA negotiating team for 'repudiating their earlier agreement'.

If I can convince my MNAs to sign their political death-warrants by amending the Constitution why can't the PNA negotiating team convince their colleagues to ratify

⁵⁸² General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 86.

⁵⁸³ Until Hafiz Pirzada provides us with his version of events we only have Niazi's account to rely upon.

⁵⁸⁴ Kausar Niazi, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-9.

what has already been agreed upon ... If the PNA leadership is not prepared to accept what has already been agreed upon, then similarly, my Cabinet and chief ministers are also not prepared to accept it either.⁵⁸⁵

Shortly after addressing the Press conference, at 1 a.m., 4 July, it is reported that the US Ambassador Arthur Hummel called on Bhutto for urgent discussions which were held in private. It was suspected that he warned Bhutto of an imminent army take-over.⁵⁸⁶ By now all of Bhutto's alarm bells should have been ringing.

On the morning of 4 July, as people read news of Bhutto's Press conference, a feeling of gloom and confusion pervaded the country. It was clear to all that the PNA-PPP talks had broken down once again. Rumors were flourishing. That same morning I was visited by Atiya Inayatullah who informed me that martial law will soon be declared. One did not know what to believe. To my mind I sensed Bhutto was playing yet again to bring about disunity within the PNA. From the onset of the negotiations he had been informed that the negotiating team had no power to approve any term or condition without prior approval from the PNA general council. Now he was publicly accusing our team of renegeing on commitments which they were clearly unable to make in the first place. It was yet another example of his incessant deceit.

That evening the PNA general council met to discuss the latest events at a dinner given by Sirdar Abdul Qayum. It would prove to be the final gathering of its kind, 'a last supper' of sorts. For the first time we saw an open split in the alliance. Asghar Khan, Maulana Noorani and I insisted that we stick to our nine demands. Others were more flexible and some even suggested that we withdraw some of the demands which were not considered vital. At one stage Asghar Khan became emotional and berated the others for considering further concessions. I, for one, had no trust in Bhutto and was convinced that he was being purposely evasive each time we neared an agreement. Power was too dear to him to be conceded willingly. By the end of the meeting it became clear that the majority of the members favored further negotiations. With much reluctance I had to accept their decision once again. Asghar Khan was more trenchant in his criticism and announced that he had lost all confidence in the negotiating team. He openly disparaged some of the members of the PNA leadership of being in league with the regime. Bitterly accusing them of betraying those that had sacrificed their lives for the PNA movement he stormed out of the meeting.

On the same evening Bhutto had called for a meeting of his cabinet and chief ministers. It is indicative of his growing uncertainty that Bhutto had also called upon General Zia and the Director General of ISI, General Jilani to attend the meeting. At the meeting he once more heard the pros and cons of further negotiations with the PNA without

⁵⁸⁵ Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, *Phir Martial Law Aagya* (Urdu), op. cit. p. 248.

⁵⁸⁶ Kausar Niazi, op. cit., p. 229.

expressing any comment. Later he is said to have had a private chat with General Zia, which may be assumed to have been related to Ambassador Hummers early morning revelations.⁵⁸⁷

Clearly Bhutto was now unsettled, having played a dangerous game, he must have been aware of the risks he had taken. By now he must have known something was brewing, as all of a sudden his self-created obstructions came to a halt. Later that evening he summoned his close aides for an urgent discussion. With Kausar Niazi, Mumtaz Bhutto, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Hafiz Pirzada gathered before him, the unnerved Bhutto announced his decision to sign the accord and be finished with it. He then addressed a Press conference on television at 11.30 p.m. informing the country that the next day, 5 July, he would sign the accord with the PNA. But he had sailed too close to the edge. The yawning depths now closed around him and would take the country into twelve more years of misfortune. At 2 a.m. on 5 July Operation Fair Play was carried out and the army once again took Pakistan into its firm grip.

* * *

Bhutto was an undisguised totalitarian. Fundamental freedoms had been guaranteed by the Constitution. The day after the Constitution was passed a state of emergency was declared making a mockery of these supposed freedoms. For five and a half years we had witnessed democratically elected provincial governments being sacked, newspapers being banned, Opposition politicians and journalists harassed, jailed, tortured, and at times even killed, and a province savagely brought to heel. Dissent had been put down with a ruthlessness never before seen in our country.

By March 1977 Bhutto, having lost touch with the masses, had become too arrogant to countenance anything but total victory. The victory had to be organized not by PPP party workers but by chief secretaries, deputy commissioners, magistrates and superintendents of police. Faced with rejection, he tried to browbeat the Opposition by a show of naked force. When the police and paramilitary forces failed to intimidate the PNA movement, instead of negotiating, he blundered by calling in the army and declaring martial law in the urban areas. He politicized the army corps commanders by regularly calling them in for meetings and seeking their advice.

He wasted three months before agreeing to meet with the Opposition. Before he did so, he had tried every alternative to avoid it. This included the political gimmickry of Islamization-declaring Friday as the weekly holiday, bringing in prohibition and banning horse racing. Then he considered a referendum which failed to find any support. When faced with little choice he would release the jailed Opposition leaders and then when a glimmer of an alternative would emerge he would send them to jail.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

Once negotiations began he would prevaricate and hedge around wasting time without carrying out what he had promised to do, such as release political prisoners and cancel arms licenses issued to his supporters. The little trust that remained was squandered when he arrogantly went abroad in the midst of a growing climate of reconciliation. Hearing only what he wanted to hear and seeing only what he wished to see, in the end his decision to sign the accord only came when the army was minutes away from knocking at his gate. Lost in the belief of his own omnipotence, he only faced reality when it came crashing upon his head. By that time it was, of course, all far too late.

* * *

While at Islamabad I had been staying at Sirdar Shaukat Hayat's house. In the early hours of the morning of 5 July I was rudely woken by loud banging on the bedroom door. Half asleep, I opened my door to see a uniformed young man pointing a pistol at my head. He asked me in English, 'Are you Mr. Mazari?' When I replied in the affirmative, I was informed that I was under arrest. My immediate thought was that Bhutto had sent the FSF to round us all up. It occurred to me that it was perhaps time to recite the *kalima* and get prepared to meet my maker. But sudden anger boiled in me and instead I snapped at him, 'Who exactly are you?' The young man replied, 'I'm a captain in the army. Martial law has been imposed and I have orders to arrest you!' All at once I relaxed, at least the worst had not occurred. I then headed to the bathroom to wash up and get ready for departure. My path was suddenly blocked by the captain who insisted that he accompany me. I told him not to be silly. My host, Shaukat Hayat, reassured the young officer that I was not about to escape. I had a quick wash and changed out of *pyjamas* into suitable clothes. As I was about to leave I asked Begum Hayat, or Mucho Apa as she is known among friends, to supply me with two large towels in the event I ended up in a place like Mianwali Jail. As I left the house I was astounded to see that the grounds had been surrounded by nearly a hundred armed soldiers and a host of army vehicles carrying heavy caliber machine-guns. It appeared as an exercise in over-kill but I suppose in the circumstances the army planners did not wish to leave anything to chance.

In accordance with the instructions issued under the so-called Operation Fair Play I was taken to the officers' mess at Chaklala in Rawalpindi where I met up with the other detained Opposition leaders, who included Mufti Mahmood, Asghar Khan. Maulana Noorani, Professor Ghafoor, Nasrullah Khan and, to my surprise, Pir Pagaro.⁵⁸⁸ The Pir was released later that day. The PPP leaders, with the exception of Bhutto, were also brought there, but housed in separate barracks. A short while later Hafiz Pirzada walked past closely and I heard him say, 'There's the Opposition!' I could not help

⁵⁸⁸ Apart from Bhutto, those detained from the PPP side included Hafiz Pirzada, Kausar Niazi, Mumtaz Bhutto, Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Tikka Khan and Sheikh Rasheed. The army also hauled up a number of key bureaucrats such as Rao Rashid (Director Intelligence Bureau), Masood Mahmood (Director General FSF), Akram Sheikh (Director FIA), Muhammad Raza (Deputy-Director FSF) and Vaqar Ahmed (Cabin Secretary).

correcting him, There is no longer any government, nor, for that matter, any Opposition. We, my friend, are now all prisoners of the army'.

At 7 p.m. that evening we were requested to assemble to watch General Zia address the nation on television. In his speech he declared that he harbored no political ambitions and had been forced to take the steps that he had taken because of the 'vacuum created by political leaders'. He went on to state that:

My sole aim is to organize free and fair elections which would be held in October this year.

Soon after the polls, power will be transferred to the elected representatives of the people. I give a solemn assurance that I will not deviate from this schedule.⁵⁸⁹

This would become one of the most colossal misrepresentations ever made in the history of Pakistan.

During this twenty-minute speech Zia appeared to me to be sympathetic towards Bhutto. The PPP leader had been shifted by helicopter to the comfortable Government House at Murree, and had been accorded the unique privilege of having his former Military Secretary and his ADCs still serving him. It occurred to me that perhaps Zia's hand had been forced by his generals. But the deed had been done. Bhutto was no longer in power and I was satisfied by Zia's assurance that elections would be held within ninety days. My views on the corps commanders' role in the coup, were confirmed by the former Army Chief of Staff, General Gul Hassan Khan who maintained 'Bhutto's exit was accomplished by all senior officers exerting immense pressure on General Ziaul Haq'.⁵⁹⁰

The following day, 5 July, the six of us from the PNA were taken to Murree and confined to Punjab House, which for me was a decided improvement from Mianwali Jail. The weather was cool and I had to send a message to my friend Syed Asad Ali who was holidaying nearby at the Clifden Farm to send me some warm socks and a woollen sweater. At Murree we had time to, reflect upon the recent events and discuss them amongst ourselves. At one stage Mufti Mahmood expressed his disappointment with my stance on insisting upon the withdrawal of the army from Balochistan and the release of our colleagues who had been jailed in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case. I repeated my earlier view to him that to my mind Bhutto had been using the negotiations to buy time. I reminded Mufti Sahib that Bhutto had consistently evaded and prevaricated over the vital issue of giving the Implementation Council a

⁵⁸⁹ Excerpt from General Ziaul Haq's address to the nation on 5 July 1 (Full text of the speech can be found in: Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan 1947-86*, Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1986, Appendix H, pp. 289-93).

⁵⁹⁰ Lt.-General Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs*, op. cit., p. 412.

constitutional backing. By giving such a constitutional sanction to the council Bhutto would have then been unable to repudiate the agreement at a later stage. Only when the army coup was upon him did he express a sudden desire to concede this point. I was convinced that Bhutto had used the servile Zia as a ruse to counteract our demands on Balochistan and the Hyderabad Tribunal. My views were subsequently confirmed separately by both General Chishti and General Arif. At the very first meeting between Zia and Bhutto after the army take-over, on 15 July, Bhutto asked Zia to ensure that the army was not withdrawn from Balochistan and the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case was not interfered with.⁵⁹¹ It made a mockery of Bhutto's earlier claim to the PNA that he was keen to resolve these two issues but that it was the army which was not allowing him to.

On 8 July General Zia telephoned Mufti Mahmood and asked about our welfare. A few days later on 12 July he telephoned once again and asked Mufti Mahmood to convey his salaams to all of us. The following day I was contacted by the office of the local General Officer Commanding (the GOC then was Major-General Akhtar Abdul Rehman) and informed that a staff car was on its way to fetch me for some important discussions. I was quite nonplussed and replied that there was nothing that I could not discuss in front of my colleagues. The answer was no, only I was to come. It occurred to me that perhaps I was up for interrogation so I asked if I needed to collect any of my belongings. I was told that I would not be needing anything. Quite mystified I took the staff car to the GOC's office on the Mall in Murree, only to find my friend Air Marshal Nur Khan sitting there waiting for me. He told me that he had come at the express request of General Zia. It seemed Zia was a little apprehensive as the only one among us whom he had met previously was Asghar Khan, someone from whom he expected very little cooperation. Nur Khan asked me if we were in the mood to receive Zia. I expressed my amazement at the request. It appeared odd in the extreme for a captor to ask his prisoners' permission to meet with them. I took Nur Khan back to our place of confinement and invited him to have lunch with the rest of the PNA leadership. He was pleasantly received. After lunch he left to call on Bhutto with a similar request. I later learnt he was met initially with a temper tantrum, but in the end he managed to persuade Bhutto to meet with his once subordinate Army Chief of Staff.

On 16 July Zia visited us. Accompanying him were Generals Chishti and Arif, and Ghulam Ishaq Khan. My first impression of Zia was that of an extremely deferential man. He exuded humility and was extremely courteous to all. He asked us if we were comfortable in our lodgings and if there was anything he could do to improve things. Then he apologized for the army take-over and informed us that he had been left with no other alternative. He gave us a broad meaningful look before adding that the

⁵⁹¹ Lt.-General Faiz Ali Chishti, *Betrays of Another Kind*, op. cit., p. and General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 113. (Both of the Generals accompanied Zia to the meeting with Bhutto on 15 July 1977).

Military Intelligence had warned him that 'a lot of bloodshed was going to take place in the country'.

When Zia asked us what he could do for us, Mufti Mahmood and Nasrullah Khan asked him to ensure our release before Ramzan which was to begin in the beginning of August. I took the opportunity of asking him about the issues that continued to remain close to my heart: to return the troops to the barracks in Balochistan and the release of the NAP leaders held in Hyderabad Jail. Zia promised me that he would attend to them. Then the six of us collectively requested him to release all the PNA supporters who were still languishing in prison and to compensate the families of those killed in the movement. Again, Zia promised that he would sort the matter out very soon.

One person he locked horns with was Asghar Khan. He criticized Asghar Khan for sending a letter to military commanders asking them not to obey 'unlawful commands' of the Bhutto regime instructing them to take action against the PNA protesters. Zia informed Asghar Khan that he considered the letter to be an act of sedition and intended putting him on trial for it. Asghar Khan retorted that he could do whatever he liked. It was then left up to the ever solicitous Mufti Mahmood to calm tempers and soothe the situation. Having met us, General Zia then went to Government House to meet with Bhutto. Later reports indicated that their meeting had not been smooth. It was probably then that Ziaul Haq decided that he could not work with him. Satisfied with his visits Zia allowed us to have visitors from then on. He also stood by his commitment and visited Wali Khan, Attaullah Mengal, Khair Buksh Marri, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and other NAP members in Hyderabad Jail.

On 28 July we were all taken under custody and taken by road to Islamabad. Bhutto, however, was taken there in a special helicopter. I headed for Karachi and was received by a tumultuous crowd. Most of the detained PNA leadership were similarly feted in their home towns as returning heroes. But we were not the only ones. That same day the newly released Bhutto was received by a large crowd at Rawalpindi. Realizing the electoral battle that lay ahead, he knew it was time to shed his acquired persona of a major world statesman, and revert to his earlier role of a combative street fighting politician.

Portraying himself as an underdog he went on the offensive. A journalist in *The Herald* magazine in September 1977 describing his electioneering said:

[Bhutto] has re-emerged on the political scene not only unrepentant but in a surly, aggressive mood, with his usual slogans and catchwords and shibboleths. His fall, he would have us believe, was brought about not by his own follies but

through a conspiracy between a foreign power and local vested interests out to destroy Pakistan and crush her poor masses.⁵⁹²

Bhutto resorted to shamefully abusing his political opponents to amuse the masses. The same journalist, who was covering the PPP leader's campaign, mentions an instance at Lahore when Bhutto publicly made 'an obscene threat' towards Mufti Mahmood. The threat was 'so filthy', according to the journalist, that even Bhutto was compelled to check himself in midst of his delivery and then complain that he was forced to do so as there were women present.⁵⁹³

The battle lines for the new elections were set. The PPP announced on 4 August that it would contest the October elections. Despite the ban on political activity until 14 August, Bhutto opted to violate the restrictions. On 6 August he went to Multan and addressed a large and rowdy crowd. Two days later he arrived at Lahore and was met by a tremendous swarm of people. Some of these enthusiasts physically attacked a number of PNA leaders whom they chanced upon. The unfortunate victims of this violence were Maulana Noorani and Maulana Sattar Niazi, who were taken off a rickshaw near Lahore's cantonment bridge and badly roughed up. That evening Maulana Noorani received a personal telephone call from General Zia, in our presence, apologizing for the incident and promising to protect the PNA leadership from all forms of PPP hooliganism in the future.

While Bhutto and the PPP went about campaigning in earnest, the PNA became embroiled in a debate over the allocation of election seats among its component parties. The parliamentary board of the PNA, headed by Pir Pagaro, was making extremely slow progress. Their work remained incomplete even at the final date for the filing of nomination papers. Aspiring candidates were then advised to file their papers in the constituencies they wished to contest until a final decision was announced. When the parliamentary board's first decision, which related to Sindh, was announced, it led to a storm of protest within the PNA. In Sindh out of a total of 43 seats, 20 had gone to Pagaro's Muslim League and 6 more to Muslim League-supported independents. Of the remaining 17 seats, 6 were given to Jamaat-i-Islami, 5 to JUP, 3 to JUI, 2 to Tehrik-i-Istiqal and 1 to NDP. What annoyed some of us was that a number of these PNA tickets had been allocated to former stalwarts of the PPP who had now switched sides. On 22 August the Karachi newspaper *The Star* earned a banner headline: 'Stormy PNA Meeting at Lahore Today.. NDP Angry at Raw Deal in Sindh'. It reported:

The NDP leader Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, yesterday strongly supported the demand of young workers of the PNA (voiced by *The Star* yesterday) that the PNA should not allow 'notorious PPP men' to join the Alliance Pir Pagaro's

⁵⁹² Zubair Siddiqui, 'Why Bhutto fell', *The Herald*, Karachi, September 1977, p. 7.

⁵⁹³ *The Star*, Karachi, 22 August 1977.

League. The PNA, he very aptly said should not be made another Convention League.⁵⁹⁴

By 25 August NDP received two further seats in Sindh, raising its total to 3 seats in the province. Little by little the issue of the seats was resolved, but even so it was not to everyone's liking. The Viewpoint magazine commented:

The NDP leadership thinks that it has been overlooked glaringly in Sind, although it has built up sizeable support among the working classes, more substantial, according to some Karachi NDP men, than the former NAP had ever managed.

However, neither the NDP Chief Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, nor Begum Nasim Wali Khan were willing to comment on these aspects this week. They were both of the view that purely party interests should at this time be subordinated to the bigger question of preserving PNA unity. Having come thus far, it was crucial that the Alliance should continue to function with a solid, unified front, they said.⁵⁹⁵

On 13 August Zia telephoned me asking me to meet with him to discuss the Balochistan issue. I contacted the NDP provincial leadership of Balochistan to accompany me for the meeting with the Chief Martial Law Administrator but I was informed later that Zia wished to see me alone on the evening of 15 August.

On the morning of 15 August I received an unexpected call from the Home Secretary of Balochistan. He told me that he had just externed the aging Pathan leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan from Balochistan and had placed him on a plane bound for Karachi. When he was asked who should be requested to receive him at Karachi, Ghaffar Khan mentioned my name, adding that I was the only person he could trust in Karachi. At the airport 'Badshah Khan', as he was called by his admirers, was placed in my care by the Deputy-Superintendent of Police who had escorted him to Karachi from Quetta. The first person Ghaffar Khan wanted to meet was Attaullah Mengal. At his insistence we drove straight from the airport to Cardiovascular Hospital where the ailing Ataullah Mengal was being kept for treatment. From there he went on to meet with the Sindhi nationalist leader G. M. Syed. The local authorities did not approve of Ghaffar Khan's forced visit to Karachi. After allowing him to visit his son Wali Khan in Hyderabad Jail on 20 August, he was externed from Sindh as well. I went to the airport to see him off as he boarded a plane for NWFP.

When I met General Zia on the evening of 15 August at Karachi, I reminded him of the promise he had made to me at Sihala regarding the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case and

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁹⁵ *Viewpoint*, Lahore, 28 August, 1977, (Lahore Diary) p. 7.

the withdrawal of the army from Balochistan. Now I appealed to him to honor his commitment. Zia said he had not forgotten the pledge and had every intention of honoring it. During our discussions on the situation in Balochistan, I suggested to him that he have the army withdrawn before the coming elections in October so that there was every chance for the people in the province to freely vote for the representatives of their choice. I also told him that it was necessary to pay compensation to all those who had lost their family members, had their homes destroyed, their livestock confiscated and crops ruined as a result of the military action. Zia replied that not all his colleagues in the army would be happy with such an all encompassing proposal. Countering him, I proposed that he talk directly with the jailed leadership of Balochistan about the future settlement of issues in the province.

On the future of the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, Zia had accepted the two alternative solutions I had proposed to resolve the issue that is, either the special tribunal be discharged and the prisoners released or else the tribunal follow laws that applied in normal courts. Zia insisted that he needed more time to sort the issues out. I then raised the issue of Attaullah Mengal's health. The Mengal Sirdar had a serious heart problem and the doctors at the Cardiovascular Hospital were not able to perform the bypass operation required. Zia informed me that he would address the matter very shortly.

The next morning I received a call from Zia's Military Secretary advising me that instructions had been issued to have Attaullah Mengal released on bail. Ten days later, on Zia's specific instructions, the ailing Attaullah Mengal and his doctor were flown on government expense to Houston to receive urgently needed medical attention. Later he would also have Wali Khan shifted from Hyderabad Jail to a Military Hospital in Rawalpindi ostensibly for dental treatment.

Unfortunately by now serious differences had cropped up among the NAP leadership. The most pertinent related to Ghaus Buksh Bizenjo. He was completely ostracized by his colleagues for his suspected underhand dealing with Bhutto through his associate, B. M. Kutti, as well as his clandestine meetings with Bhutto's personal security chief, Saied Ahmed Khan. Later history would also reveal that he had maintained other secret links as well. General Hussain Firdost, who headed the Shah of Iran's dreaded secret police Savak, revealed in his memoirs that when Bizenjo as Governor Balochistan, visited Iran with Bhutto in 1972, he was given 'a large sum of money to ensure that Baluch nationalism did not spread across the border to Iran'.⁵⁹⁶ Firdost further stated that Bizenjo continued to work for Savak until the Shah's overthrow in 1979. While none of his colleagues truly realized the full extent of Bizenjo's betrayal, most of us had lost all faith in him. He even managed to surprise the normally unflappable Zia when on 12 August 1977, he asked the General to provide him with a new Mercedes car to replace

⁵⁹⁶ Lt.-General Hussain Firdost, *Shah Iran Kay Sival Mein Khiifia Age Ka Kirdar* (Urdu-The Activities of Intelligence Agencies during the Shah of Iran's Reign), Function House, Lahore, 1997, p. 233.

his aging vehicle. Zia obliged Bizenjo and a Mercedes was presented to him in June 1978.⁵⁹⁷

By now a split had also emerged between the Pathan leaders led by Wali Khan and the Baloch leadership. When Wali Khan was transferred from Hyderabad Jail to the Combined Military Hospital at Rawalpindi, the Baloch leaders began to harbor suspicions that he was making a clandestine deal with Zia behind their backs. Zia was to make two trips to the hospital to meet Wali Khan. The NAP leader candidly told Zia that he had ideological differences with the Baloch leaders. He said, 'Our visible unity is no more than skin-deep ... [and] even this has been forced on me because the government had made me a co-accused with them in the joint trial'.⁵⁹⁸

General Zia had been pushed by his senior generals, in all probability led by Chishti, into ousting Bhutto. He was a man about whom one of his superior officers, Brigadier (later Major-General Nawazish Ali Khan, had once written in a confidential report: 'He is not fit to be an officer in the Pakistan Army'.⁵⁹⁹

Having attained the highest of military offices through acts of blatant toadyism, which were openly admitted to even by his serving colleagues such as Generals Chishti and Arif, Zia was treated scornfully by Bhutto. At times Bhutto would humiliate Zia by making him sit for over an hour outside in a waiting room before deciding to meet with him.⁶⁰⁰ On other occasions he would make fun of his teeth.⁶⁰¹ Apparently it was in Zia's nature to accept his abasement in silence, knowing full well that he owed his position to Bhutto.

Having been forced by his comrades into overthrowing the PPP regime, General Zia-ul-Haq then did his utmost to convince Bhutto of his honesty of purpose and the fact that he had been pushed into a situation not of his own making. General Chishti who was present at the first meeting between the two men shortly after the coup, quoted Zia as telling Bhutto 'that he was only a temporary custodian. Thereafter it was going to be all Mr. Bhutto's again and he should manage it as deemed fit'.⁶⁰² General Arif, the other witness present at the meeting, recalled:

Zia also told Bhutto that he had intervened reluctantly, was determined to remain neutral, and would hold fair elections on schedule. Thereafter, 'I will revert to the barracks leaving the field free for you to manage the affairs of the state as you consider appropriate', said Zia.

⁵⁹⁷ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 140.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁵⁹⁹ Lt.-General Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs*, op. cit., p. 401.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 395-6.

⁶⁰¹ Stanley Wolpert. *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 313.

⁶⁰² Lt.-General Faiz Ali Chishti, *Betrays of Another Kind*, op. cit., p. 18.

Granting the deposed Bhutto full protocol and permission to retain his ADCs at Murree's luxurious Government House, after releasing him he even accorded Bhutto the privilege of returning to Larkana on the prime ministerial Falcon jet. Clearly, Zia left no stone unturned to appease Bhutto's sensibilities.

It is my belief that at the time of the coup and for several weeks afterwards Zia earnestly desired holding neutral elections which he thought would see Bhutto back in office again. He had apparently convinced himself that after Bhutto's return to power things would revert to normalcy once again. But soon there was a noticeable shift in his thinking. According to General Chishti, he witnessed a sudden change in Zia's attitude on the evening of 9 August. The cause, he states, was a telephone call that Zia received from Bhutto:

The conversation started nicely and politely, but gradually became harsher. I did not know what Bhutto was saying, naturally, but I could hear General Zia loud and clear. The conversation ended badly, as far as I remember like this:-

No. It cannot be done. I cannot give concessions. We are judicious to both sides. If we are not allowing them we cannot let you have it either. No that stage may not come. You may never have an opportunity. I will sort it out before that. However, I wish you good luck.

When Zia came back after the telephone call, I asked him if everything was all right. He said it was nothing, only some trivial matters. I told General Zia that Mr. Bhutto would not make a call on trivial matters. General Zia kept quiet and looked upset. I realized a crack had come.⁶⁰³

It is possible that Bhutto might have verbally threatened Zia on the telephone, but that would be a conjecture. Nevertheless, while General Chishti might have been able to pinpoint the visible change in Zia's attitude on 9 August, the actual cause for the transformation most likely lay elsewhere. Zia's position had altered dramatically since the coup. From being Bhutto's much deprecated 'monkey-general' he now found himself elevated to the most powerful position in the country.⁶⁰⁴ As Chief Martial Law Administrator he possessed sole charge of the country and was now privy to information about everything. Authentic evidence of Bhutto's vengefulness must have unnerved him. As one foreign historian commented:

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-4.

⁶⁰⁴ Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 263. (According to Wolpert Bhutto would often make Zia a butt of public ridicule and shout at him from the head of the dinner table, 'Where's my monkey-general. Come over here, Monkey!')

Zia could not ignore the accounts of gross abuse of power that were leveled at Bhutto. Moreover, the Army had launched an investigation of Bhutto's Federal Security Force (FSF), had arrested its head Masood Mahmood and disarmed his troops. Records uncovered in the seizure of FSF files revealed numerous acts, supposedly taken on Bhutto's orders, against the political opposition. In a number of cases the regime's antagonists had been violently killed. The arrest of Vaqar Ahmed, the bureaucracy's Establishment Secretary and Rao Rashid, Chief of Bhutto's National Intelligence Bureau also led to further disclosures.⁶⁰⁵

If Bhutto had threatened Zia on the telephone that day, it would have acted as a catalyst preying on Zia's new-found fears. About this time Zia started feeling threatened by the possible resurgence of Bhutto. When he visited Wali Khan at the military hospital, the NAP leader who had first-hand experience of Bhutto's vindictiveness, warned the General in jocular fashion, 'There are two corpses and only one grave. If Bhutto is not buried first you might have to lead the way'.⁶⁰⁶ It was a warning, which by now Zia must have taken to heart. He had realized that if Bhutto won the elections his own life could be at stake. In a changed political climate, Zia, as the army chief at the time of a *coup d'état*, could be tried for treason. One of the penalties for treason was death. Faced with a fraught and perilous future Zia soon found the means of ensuring his own survival. The man that he had only a few days earlier praised as a 'tenacious fighter and a great politician' would soon be referred to as 'an evil genius and a Machiavelli'. who had let loose 'a reign of terror' in Pakistan'.⁶⁰⁷ In an interview published a few weeks later Zia went on to describe Bhutto as being 'a total fraud and a cold-blooded murderer' who 'had been running a Gestapo-style police state in which kidnapping and political murder had become routine'.⁶⁰⁸

On 7 July the family of the murdered Ahmed Khan Kasuri had appealed to the martial law authorities for justice in apprehending his killers. The victim's son Ahmed Raza Kasuri requested that the case be heard by the Lahore High Court. At the time of the killing on 11 November 1974 Raza Kasuri had named Bhutto as the murderer in the First Information Report registered at the police station. Interestingly enough, the fact that he blamed Bhutto for his father's murder, had not prevented Raza Kasuri from rejoining the PPP and applying for a party ticket in the March 1977 elections, only to be met with rejection. Now only a few months later and only two days after Bhutto's downfall the exceptionally opportunistic Raza Kasuri resumed his case against the PPP leader.

⁶⁰⁵ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development*, Dawson Westview, UK, 1980, pp. 200-1.

⁶⁰⁶ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., pp. 166-7. (As Wali Khan in all probability spoke to Zia in Urdu, I have deliberately paraphrased the quote to improve its nuance.)

⁶⁰⁷ General K. M. Arif. *Working with Zia*, op. cit., pp. 132-3.

⁶⁰⁸ General Ziaul Haq interview, *Urdu Digest*, Lahore, September 1977 p. 28.

Clearly, if the martial law authorities had wished to ignore the case they had the requisite power to do so. Instead, they chose to pursue it vigorously. General Arif, the Chief of Staff to the CMLA, was the key man behind the investigation.⁶⁰⁹ In his memoirs he states:

In July 1977, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) was directed to assist the [Major-General S. R. Kallue] Committee in assessing the performance of the FSF. During the course of its investigation, FIA detected hard evidence implicating the FSF in the 11 November 1974 murder in Lahore. Two employees of the FSF were arrested. On interrogation they confessed their participation in the commission of the offence. The links they provided widened the net. More arrests were made, in which additional evidence was unearthed. The evidence implicated Masood Mahmood, the Director General of the FSF ... [who] while held in custody ... had written a confessional statement accepting his crime and taking the plea that he had acted on the orders given to him by Mr. Bhutto. The incriminating evidence was too strong to be ignored.⁶¹⁰

It has been subsequently claimed that 'Zia was ... confronted by his corps commanders. After an intense discussion it was agreed to re-arrest Bhutto, to examine the charges leveled against him, and to try him if the evidence warranted it'.⁶¹¹ The most influential corps commander at that time, General Chishti denies all prior knowledge about the investigation of the murder case and insists that the case could not have been pursued without direct clearance from the CMLA. And, he adds, that General Zia used A. K. Brohi and Sharifuddin Pirzada to advise him on how to proceed against Bhutto.⁶¹²

General Chishti also mentions, in his memoirs, that on 2 September 1977 he was summoned by Zia to his residence. Zia told Chishti that he had planned to visit Karachi the following day but was unable to do so 'because of an unforeseen commitment'. Now he wished Chishti to fly to Karachi instead and personally inform the Sindh martial law commander, General Jehanzeb Arbab to arrest Bhutto. According to Chishti, when he protested that Zia could do it himself by contacting General Arbab on the confidential 'seorophone', he was told that the message could only be given in person.⁶¹³ If one goes by Chishti's version of events, it does seem as if Zia was eager to stay in the background and let Chishti carry the blame. Yet, in the absence of any corroboration it is difficult to establish the true course of events in the highest echelons of the army. Nevertheless, on

⁶⁰⁹ 'The only staff officer who could have been fully in the picture [about the Kasuri murder case] was Maj.-Gen. K. M. Arif': Lt.-General Faiz A Chishti, *Betrays of Another Kind*, op. cit., p. 82.

⁶¹⁰ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 179.

⁶¹¹ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development*, op. cit., p. 201.

⁶¹² Lt.-General Faiz Ali Chishti, *Betrays of Another Kind*, op. cit., p. 82. Both these legal peddlers (A. K. Brohi and Sharifuddin Pirzada) made their 'high' reputations on advising the establishment on how to legally avoid their constitutional and lawful responsibilities. Most of our draconian amendments to the constitutions in recent times bear the fingerprints of one or both of them.

⁶¹³ Lt.-General Faiz Ali Chishti, *Betrays of Another Kind*, op. cit., p. 81.

the following day, 3 September, Bhutto was arrested at his Clifton residence on a charge of conspiring a murder.

* * *

By late August moves were afoot to get all the parties in the PNA to merge into one party. Four parties, including Jamaat-i-Islami, JUI, and Muslim League, were in favor of it. Asghar Khan, Maulana Noorani and I disapproved. Commenting on the possibilities of a PNA merger the Viewpoint magazine said:

[The] JUP leader Maulana Noorani expressed his misgivings ... NDP President Mazan has spoken out with similar reservations, pointing out with refreshing frankness, that the PNA was an anti-Bhutto front, and would continue to work only as long as the Bhutto danger was alive. Tehrik's Asghar Khan has rejected the move more definitely. This makes the score three - all among the parties that matter.⁶¹⁴

The idea of the merger died a quiet death.

On 25 August a PNA general council meeting had been called at Quetta. Asghar Khan opted not to attend and sent Mahmood Ali Kasuri to represent him. Three non-party heads insisted upon attending the meeting. They were Moula Buksh Soomro and Ali Ahmed Talpur from Sindh, and Zahoor Ellahi from Punjab. At the meeting the three men then began to plead with the PNA leadership that we should refrain from pressurizing General Zia to hold the elections as scheduled for October and warned of serious bloodshed if we persisted with the idea of early elections. I suspected they feared that Bhutto might regain his lost popularity, but at the time had little inkling that these three were acting at Zia's behest.⁶¹⁵

My concern was that without the release of the elected leadership of Balochistan and the NWFP from Hyderabad Jail the election would prove to be a farce in these two provinces. When questioned about what my views would be at the possible postponement of elections, I said provided Zia had valid reasons for the postponement publicly and made a firm commitment to hold them by March 1978 latest, then the NDP would not raise any objection in the event of a brief delay. For my part I was relying on Zia's promise that the jailed NAP leaders would soon be released. I keenly wanted these leaders to be able to participate in any future election campaign.

There was no unanimity at the meeting, but it would be incorrect to maintain, as has been suggested by some, that at this early stage some of the PNA parties (as opposed to

⁶¹⁴ *Viewpoint*, Lahore 28 August 1977. (Linesman) p. 5.

⁶¹⁵ Later all three of them would hold cabinet rank in the martial law government.

some individuals including Zahoor Illahi, etc.) were acting in connivance with Zia. Most of the parties were more preoccupied with the coming elections and a number of them were focused on seats and keen to enhance their share. For some of them release of any of the NAP leaders from jail would have meant a reduction in their quota of seats in Balochistan and NWFP. As such, indecisiveness prevailed. Prompted by Zahoor Ellahi, Moula Buksh Soomro and All Ahmed Talpur, a decision was made that the PNA would remain silent in case Zia decided to postpone the elections, provided, however, that a complete process of accountability was carried out concerning all contesting politicians. But, it would be fair to say that most of us were expecting elections to be held on time. On 3 September, quite unaware that Bhutto had been arrested that day, as official leader of the PNA, Mufti Mahmood publicly demanded that elections be held as scheduled in October.

In the first week of September General Zia surprised all by announcing that 18 October as Election day had not been fixed by divine revelation and that the polls could be delayed a few days or a week - if the people so desired or if various political parties supported such a demand. It was the first public sign of a wavering from his earlier commitment. Later, on 4 September Martial Law regulation No. 21 was promulgated. The new law demanded a declaration of assets from all former members of the national and provincial legislatures within a fifteen-day period. The information provided by the politicians made for interesting reading.

In the meantime the election campaign continued with full fervor. Busy with electioneering most of us were quite unaware that some of our colleagues were meeting Zia and secretly encouraging him to prolong his martial law. According to General Arif, 'the Pir of Pagaro and Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi, met Zia on 30 September and requested the postponement of elections, the former suggesting a five-year delay'.⁶¹⁶ And it also subsequently appeared that such renegades did not only exist in the PNA. General Chishti informed us that on the afternoon of 28 September:

[PPP leaders such as] Khar, Jatoi, Kausar Niazi, Mir Afzal, Hamid Raza Gillani and Noor Hayat Noon met fthe Zia appointed] Election Cell and recommended that the elections be postponed and no new date given. Martial Law must become strict, and accountability proceeded with through civil courts.⁶¹⁷

While Muslim Leaguers, such as Pir Pagaro and Zahoor Ellahi, had only an electoral alliance with the rest of the PNA, these PPP leaders were clandestinely in direct opposition to the dictates of their party chairman, Z. A. Bhutto. Clearly, the grip of fear that Bhutto used to exert control over his party men was no longer functional now that he was out of power.

⁶¹⁶ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 131.

⁶¹⁷ Lt.-General Faiz Ali Chishti, *Betrays of Another Kind*, op. cit., p. 140.

On 1 October Zia announced on a national broadcast on radio: 'There is cry from the country that accountability should take place before elections Holding elections under the present circumstances will be inviting a new crisis. So the elections are postponed till further announcement'.⁶¹⁸ At the same time he also proclaimed a complete ban on all political activity. When the PNA leaders met Zia, on 13 October, he was asked to explain his reasons for the postponement. Zia replied by blaming the deteriorating law and order situation. The campaign according to him had not been orderly and the martial law authorities had received information that there were some 'political elements' who were plotting to create trouble. To me this explanation appeared farfetched. Realizing he faced a skeptical audience Zia then embarked on another justification for the postponement. He then informed us that a number of top leaders of both the PNA and the PPP had been pleading with him to postpone the elections. His second reason suddenly appeared to be much more plausible.

The postponement of the elections was received by mixed feelings everywhere. This mood was perhaps best summed up by the *Pakistan Economist* magazine, which said:

Indefinite postponement has come as a blow to an expectant people. It is true that postponing is amply justified. But it is also true that while people want the guilty man to be punished, they want the elections very badly indeed. No doubt they [would] like to know the truth about what really went on behind the democratic facade of Mr. Bhutto. But their desire for the democratic dispensation through a free and fair elections is the strongest of them all.⁶¹⁹

Within the few short weeks doubts appeared in my mind about Zia's true intentions. By early November 1977 I had made my views public.

The National Democratic Party leader, Mr. Sherbaz Mazari, emphatically urged ... that the Martial Law authorities should announce a firm election date independent of the process of accountability, which could continue in the normal course.

He said that vacillation on the question of elections could create a despondency in the public and lead to doubts whether elections would be held in the near future.

Mr. Mazari said that contradictory statements on an election date could also erode the credibility of the present Government. As late as October 30, he added, it was said that the elections would be held immediately after completion of the

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁶¹⁹ 'A Nasty Situation' (Editorial), *Pakistan Economist*, Karachi. 8-14 October 1977, p. 6.

process of accountability which, it was said, would be over in five or six months. It was now being stated that elections might be held in October or November next year [1978].

Mr. Mazari said that the national interest demanded an early election date...⁶²⁰

Little did anyone know then that we would have to wait eleven long years before elections would be held. By then a large number of the leading players would be dead and replaced by new faces belonging to a generation of politicians, many of them raised from obscurity to be groomed and nourished under Zia's long years of dictatorship. After being cursed with five years of Bhutto's brutal megalomania, we were now fated to suffer eleven years of Zia's uncommonly corrupt hypocrisy.

⁶²⁰ 'Early Elections a Must, Says Mazari', Viewpoint, Lahore, 13 November 1977, p. 13.

CHAPTER 10

MRD and Opposing Zia's Martial Law

Soon after the postponement of the October 1977 election, a meeting of the PNA leadership was held at Jamaat-i-Islami's headquarters at Mansoor. Concern was expressed by the member parties at the postponement of the elections. It was decided that a team be appointed to meet with Zia and persuade him to keep to his word by holding elections by March 1978. Those nominated to the team included Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, as secretary-general of the PNA, Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi as a representative of the Muslim League, and myself.

At the meeting one of the issues that caused considerable disharmony was the objection raised against the continuing presidency of the alliance under Mufti Mahmood. Maulana Noorani and Asghar Khan insisted that as over a year had passed since Mufti Sahib's appointment new election should be held for the post. Asghar Khan's name was then proposed as a contestant for the PNA leadership. This was not accepted by the majority who then voted in favor of Mufti Mahmood continuing as President of the PNA for another year. The ill-feeling that was created would soon lead to a parting of ways. By 11 November, Tehrik-i-Istiqlal had left the PNA and JUP would do the same four months later in March 1978.

Professor Ghafoor, Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi and I met Zia on 19 November. Initially we discussed a number of outstanding issues with him, some of which, such as the Balochistan problem and the fate of the jailed NAP leaders in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, I had already raised with him on previous occasions. Zia assured us that he was committed to withdrawing his troops from the province and was sincerely trying to resolve the issues involved in the Hyderabad trial. The NAP leaders, he insisted, would soon be released. Then I questioned him about the shooting and kidnapping of Attaullah Mengal's son, Asadullah, and his companion. Zia said that he believed that the two young men had been murdered and their bodies buried in an unknown place. He added that 'with deep regret and despite all his efforts' he had not been able to trace the culprits.⁶²¹

⁶²¹ The fact that Zia did not put the blame of the killings of Asadullah Mengal and Ahmed Shah Kurd on Bhutto led me to suspect that they had, instead, been targeted by the Military Intelligence for their alleged activities in the Balochistan insurgency. If that indeed was the case then it would prove to be a harsh indictment on our military for carrying out cold-blooded assassinations of its own citizens on the streets of Karachi.

Other issues that we raised with Zia related to the release of all political prisoners and the withdrawal of cases registered against those involved in the PNA movement. It was also suggested to him that he ought to reverse the process of nationalization of schools that had taken place under the Bhutto regime. We maintained that complete government control of the educational system boded disaster for the future generations of students.⁶²² I took up an issue on behalf of the people of Sindh regarding the opening of an Indian Consular Office in Karachi which would make it easier for those who had relatives across the border to obtain visas.

On the key issue of elections Zia proved to be evasive. He claimed that he had received 'clear evidence' that the PPP was planning a major campaign of disruption. According to him, this could prove to be a serious risk to law and order. Then in a polite tone Zia commented on the weaknesses within the PNA. Pointing to PNA's internal disharmony over electoral seat allocations and the often contradictory statements being given by its various leaders, he said steps should be taken to improve the alliance's image in the public eye. He was acting as if his sympathies lay with the PNA. Zia, however, then insisted that in view of threatened civil violence, public interest demanded that the elections be indefinitely postponed. Both Professor Ghafoor and I openly disagreed with Zia's assessment and told him that we could only agree to the present postponement if he in return provided us with a firm date for the elections, which we insisted should be held no later than March 1978. The third member of our team, Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi was clearly supportive of Zia's stand.

Despite our clear divergence of views Zia remained a model of courtesy throughout our meeting. Over the years, even when I actively campaigned against his regime, I never found an opportunity to fault his manners. After five years of Bhutto, if for nothing else, it made for a dramatic change. After our meeting was over he insisted that the three of us stay for dinner. We were then joined by the governors of some of the provinces and an assortment of senior generals. All through the evening Zia made us the focus of his attention. It was a talent which would prove very useful to him when it came to dealing with most politicians.

* * *

In January 1978 I had to briefly interrupt a political tour of the Punjab to attend several functions given in honor of the visiting British Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan. During the state banquet, on 12 January, Zia asked me to meet with him the following day. At the same function, which had been hosted by Zia, I was surprised to come across Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Kausar Niazi, two of Bhutto's senior-most lieutenants,

⁶²² Zia did not de-nationalize the educational institutions as we had hoped would. The damage wrought by Bhutto's ill-considered nationalization has crippled the educational standards in Pakistan. Nationalization brought with it a complete mediocrity of teaching staff and institutionalized corruption within the educational system.

among the guests at the state function. It was apparent that the two gentlemen had found favor with the military leader despite the incarceration of their leader.

Meeting Zia the next day I thanked him for honoring his promise by releasing the NAP leaders and suggested to him that it was now time to discuss the grievances of the Baloch leadership and sort out the issues of compensation for the tribesmen who had suffered under the Bhutto regime. Zia appeared quite agreeable and asked me to meet him on 18 January at Karachi, along with the other members of the Baloch leadership.

On 6 December 1977 Wali Khan, along with fourteen other prisoners in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case had been granted bail. While the Pathan leaders of the NAP took advantage of their new-found freedom, their Baloch counterparts refused to file papers for bail. The Baloch leaders objected on the grounds that twenty-six of their colleagues had been refused bail and decided that as long as these men remained imprisoned they would stay with them.

By now there was a clear divergence of views between the two sets of NAP leadership. Wali Khan found it difficult to feel hostile towards the new military regime which had been responsible for releasing him after four long years of incarceration. The focus of his angry attention continued to be centered on Bhutto. Quite naturally, he was at that time, extremely bitter towards the PPP leader because of all that had been inflicted upon him, his family and his party. Once asked to comment upon Wali Khan and his family's enduring hostility towards Bhutto I had replied:

...three attempts had been made on his life, his family was arrested, his wife was arrested, his sons were tortured, [his father] Badshah Khan...was insulted and humiliated by Bhutto publicly. After all that they had gone through, can you blame them...⁶²³

On the other hand the Baloch leadership had experienced a completely different ordeal. Having politically confronted Bhutto, punishment had been savagely meted out to them and their people by the army. Hundreds had been killed, scores of women raped, houses razed, hundreds of thousands of livestock seized and thousands of villagers had been starved into

submission by the heartless army blockades. Not surprisingly leaders such as Khair Buksh Marri viewed the new military regime with deep suspicion verging on hostility. For them their tormentors were now in power. It now remained for Zia to find a way of appeasing them.

⁶²³ Syed Ziaullah and Samuel Baid, *Pakistan, An End Without a Beginning* Lancer International, New Delhi, 1985, p. 29.

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Having postponed the elections Zia needed some form of a cabinet team to assist him in managing the affairs of the country. On 14 January Zia announced a 'Council of Advisers', with the advisers being treated as federal ministers. The Council consisted of a mixture of serving senior military officers, such as General Chishti; bureaucrats, such as Ghulam Ishaq Khan; political sympathizers such as Moula Buksh Soomro and Muhammad All Hoti; businessmen such as Mustafa Gokal and General Habibullah Khan; and constitutional lawyers such as A. K. Brohi and Sharifuddin Pirzada. Interestingly, Brohi and Pirzada appeared to have hated each other.⁶²⁴

* * *

On 18 January, at Karachi, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and I called on Zia. Attaullah Mengal was abroad undergoing cardiac surgery and Khair Buksh Marri had refused to join us. It was his contention that as long as Lieutenant-General Ghulam Muhammad Malik stayed in office as the Martial Law Administrator for Balochistan he would not meet Ziaul Haq. Khair Buksh Marri held General Malik personally responsible for the atrocities committed in Chamalang. Our discussions with Zia were limited to generalities rather than any topics of substance. Importantly, the ice had finally been broken. Zia had openly shown that he was prepared to meet and discuss issues with the Baloch leadership, who until recently had publicly been adjudged to be 'traitors'. As we were leaving the State Guest House, Zia asked me to meet with him alone. Leaving Bizenjo, Zia and I walked over to an adjacent room where he requested me to consult Khair Buksh Marri upon his choice of general to head the martial law administration of Balochistan. When I confided Zia's request to the bewildered Bizenjo, he advised me to wait until Attaullah Mengal returned to Pakistan. 'Khair Buksh is never an easy man to deal with', he said, 'Attaullah is close to him and it would be best left up to him'. I thought it to be sensible advice.

In the meanwhile Zia continued to pursue a policy of appeasement with all politicians, with the exception of those badly tainted by Bhutto's rule, though other PPP notables such as Kaufar Niazi and Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi had by now made their peace with him. On 4 February the leading political personages in the country were invited by Zia to Islamabad to a special conference on national issues. Wali Khan, his wife, Bizenjo (though not yet an official party member) and I represented the NDP at this function. The gathering which included Zia, his four deputy martial law administrators, the four governors, newly appointed advisors, and a multitude of leading politicians, was subjected to five hours of addresses and discussions. Ghulam Ishaq Khan spoke on the national economy, along with Aftab Ahmed Khan, and Agha Shahi highlighted issues of foreign policy confronting Pakistan. It was a grand and artful exercise with the

⁶²⁴ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., pp. 154-5.

intended purpose of beguiling the invited politicians into believing that they were participating in the highest affairs of the country.

Two days later, on 6 February 1978, Reza Pahlavi of Iran and his wife, Farrah Diba, arrived in Pakistan on a State visit. Along with a number of political leaders I was invited to attend the State functions which were held to mark the visit. After a lunch given by President Choudhry Fazal Ellahi I was asked by Zia to attend a private meeting with the Shah. At the meeting, apart from Zia and some senior government officials, there were only three invitees, A. K. Brohi, Haji Moula Buksh Soomro and myself.

The Shah, having bestowed upon himself the title of 'The Light of the Aryans' seemed to be quite taken up with the idea of Aryan supremacy. Addressing me he said, 'You are a Baloch Sirdar, aren't you?' Getting an affirmative reply from me he then smiled and said, 'Then you are an Aryan and very much one of us'. Moments later the Shah turned around to Brohi and said, 'Given your name I imagine that you must be a Brauhi'. Brohi replied that indeed he was a Brauhi. The Shah then said rather dismissively, 'That makes you a Dravidian, does it not?' There was an awkward and embarrassing silence which was soon broken by Brohi's riposte. 'Your Imperial Majesty', he said, 'I am neither a historian nor an anthropologist but all I know is that I belong here in this country'. It would appear that tact and diplomacy were not qualities rated very highly by Reza Pahlavi.

Later the Shah sought to explain Iran's role in suppressing the Baloch insurgency to me. He said, 'I suppose that there is a general impression among the Baloch that I was fully supporting Bhutto in suppressing your rights in Balochistan. Let me make it clear that it was nothing of the kind. As far as we were concerned we were helping your government maintain law and order in a province bordering on Iran. The stability of Pakistan is of vital importance to Iran. It had nothing to do with Mr Bhutto!'

Shortly after the Shah's departure I was once again invited by Zia to meet with him. At the meeting, at which only the two of us were present, I informed him that Khair Buksh Marri had made his choice for the post for the governor of Balochistan. Attaullah Mengal had very recently passed the word to me that Khair Buksh Marri had recommended the name of General Rahimuddin. In the early 1950s Rahimuddin had been posted as a junior officer in Quetta where he had met Khair Buksh Marri. Both were keen sportsmen and soon took to regularly playing tennis and squash together at the Quetta Club. According to Khair Buksh Marri, Rahimuddin was the only general he knew who could be trusted to play fair in Balochistan. Zia told me that he had no objection to Rahimuddin becoming the governor of Balochistan. He said that he would discuss the matter with his generals but 'he expected an affirmative answer from them as well'. And thus the governorship of Balochistan was awarded on the basis of a partnership on the tennis courts of the Quetta Club a quarter of a century earlier.

Very soon after I returned to Karachi and commenced upon an extensive political tour of Sindh which began on 8 February and lasted until the 23rd of that month with Begum Naseem Wali Khan, the vice president of the party. The NDP leadership was warmly received by a number of local luminaries including Ayub Khuro and Kazi Fazlullah at Larkana. We even addressed meetings at Zulfikar Bhutto's village of Gari Khuda Buksh and his cousin Mumtaz Bhutto's village of Rato Dero. Despite my bitter experience at the hands of Bhutto I was reluctant to criticize him now that he was in jail as it did not seem to be fair. It became obvious, however, that a number of other NDP members did not see the situation in the same light, Many made highly critical speeches against Bhutto but none were more vitriolic than the ones made by NDP President of Sindh, Hakim Ali Zardari (ironically his son would later marry Bhutto's daughter, Benazir). Despite the harsh criticism of their home born son the crowd surprisingly did not only not object but rather clapped loudly and even raised slogans against Bhutto. It was remarkably strange.

The following month President Daoud Khan of Afghanistan arrived for a four-day official visit to Pakistan at Zia's invitation. He arrived on 5 March and there were a host of attendant banquets and functions to which the PNA leadership were also invited. After a lunch hosted by General Zia, Wali Khan, Attaullah Mengal, Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi and I paid a courtesy visit on the Afghan President in Zia's presence. It was my first meeting with Sirdar Daoud Khan and he greeted me warmly. He told me that he had heard about me through his fellow Pathans and made much about reports he had received about my efforts to get the NAP leadership out of jail. To my surprise he then invited me to visit Afghanistan as a State guest. But it was never to be. Only a month and a half later he was brutally assassinated along with most members of his family. Ironically, I have a photograph in my possession of my meeting with Daoud Khan. In the photo there are four other people besides me. Sirdar Daoud Khan, the Afghan Foreign Minister (whose name I cannot recollect), Wali Khan, and General Zia. The first two died during the bloody Communist *coup* that took place in Afghanistan on 27 April 1978. Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi was murdered by Al-Zulfikar in September 1981 and Zia was killed in August 1988. All the ill-fated four were to die violently.

Daoud Khan's death was a tragedy for Pakistan. During his visit a breakthrough had been made in the perennially hostile relations over the borders of the two neighboring countries. Asked about the Durand Line at his farewell press conference, Daoud Khan had replied 'everything was discussed, and with the passage of time everything would fall into place'.⁶²⁵ Having seized power from his cousin King Zahir Shah with the help of a group of rebellious, Soviet-trained military officers with ties to GRU (the Soviet military intelligence agency), Daoud Khan had by now turned against his Communist

⁶²⁵ *Asian Recorder*. 26 March-1 April 1978. 14237.

allies.⁶²⁶ On the night of 25 April the Afghan police arrested the top Communist leaders. While most of the loyalist soldiers were participating in officially ordered celebrations to mark 'the downfall of the *Kafir* communists', on 27 April the Communist-led section of the armed forces struck.⁶²⁷ After refusing to surrender voluntarily, Daoud Khan and his family were all murdered. By dawn the following morning the 'Saur Revolution' had overthrown the established old elite of Afghanistan from power.

The Communist *coup* led to twenty years of ruin and misery in Afghanistan. With Afghanistan internally at war, the persistent and somewhat misguided interventionist policies of our military leadership and their political acolytes over the following years resulted in the people of Pakistan paying a bitter price. A final 'advantageous' solution in Afghanistan still continues to elude our Pakistani masterminds.

After Daoud Khan's departure on 8 March a large number of us left for NWFP to attend the wedding of Wali Khan's son, Asfandiyar. Shortly after the nikah ceremony was performed we received a message that the family patriarch Abdul Ghaffar Khan wished to meet with Khair Buksh Marri, Attaullah Mengal, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and me. We found Ghaffar Khan seated under the shade of a chinar tree in the garden. He was in a reflective frame of mind.

As we talked Ghaffar Khan began to relate his first-hand experience of the events that led to the birth of Pakistan. He said that history clearly states that Mr Jinnah had expressed his acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan which had called for a confederacy in India. Each province was to have control of all aspects of government with the exception of foreign affairs, defence, communications and currency which were to remain within the preserve of the federal government. In Ghaffar Khan's opinion the Cabinet Mission Plan, which had already been accepted by, both the Muslim League and the Congress party, had been the ideal solution to the predicament facing the Subcontinent. In the words of the old and seasoned Congressite it was only when Nehru later 'foolishly and impetuously' refused to accept the Plan that Mr. Jinnah found himself compelled to demand a separate homeland.

The eventual partition of British India into Pakistan and India resulted in the massacre of hundreds of thousands of innocents. People were savagely butchered, their villages were pillaged and women were brutally raped and abducted. In an emotional voice Ghaffar Khan condemned all those who had instigated the barbarity and held them answerable to God and to history. According to him it was distorted remnants of what once had been Mr. Jinnah's Muslim League that soon deprived East Pakistan of its rightful role in the new country. The break up, he believed, had been inevitable. Regarding the problems facing the country in 1978 Ghaffar Khan was insistent that the

⁶²⁶ Diego Cordovez and Selig Harrison. *Out of Afghanistan*, Oxford New York, 1995, p. 14.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

answer lay with a confederal system, with the provincial governments of NWFP, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan enjoying all powers with the exception of foreign affairs, defence, communications and currency, which would remain with Islamabad. In time, he believed, it was possible that some of the provinces such as NWFP and Balochistan may wish to amalgamate. That would be left entirely up to them, even Sindh could join if it so wished. That was the prerogative of the provinces in a confederal structure, he said. The aged Pathan leader appeared deeply concerned with the future well-being of the country. These were the words of a man widely and unjustly condemned to be a traitor by successive 'patriotic' dictators.

Unfortunately 'patriotism' has become the sole preserve of whomsoever happens to be in power in Pakistan. Those holding views divergent to those in office at Islamabad almost always suffer the opprobrium of 'treason'. It was Samuel Johnson who once rightly said 'patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel'.

To my mind no one has the right to adjudge another person's loyalty to one's country unless of course the person is found to be actively assisting a foreign power against the interests of his own homeland. The only person on record to have committed treason, to my knowledge, was Ghulam Mustafa Khar when he directly met Indira Gandhi to seek India's assistance in providing weapons to overthrow Zia's regime.⁶²⁸ It is worth recalling that rather than be censured for his actions, the post-Zia bureaucratic/military establishment of Ghulam Ishaq Khan and General Mirza Aslam Baig rewarded Khar by making him a federal minister in 1990. Clearly, in Pakistan treasonous activity can be overlooked if political self-interest is involved. Both Ghulam Ishaq and General Aslam Baig were keen to enlist Khar's services with the hope that he may help weaken Benazir Bhutto and her PPP's support in Punjab in the elections. Similarly, in 1990 Jam Sadiq Ali, a man who had fled the country after being charged with the murder of six of Pir Pagaro's Hurs, with strong evidence implicating his guilt, was appointed Chief Minister of Sindh in an attempt to exorcise Sindh of the PPP. Without doubt Ghulam Ishaq donned the mantle of 'patriotism' to absolve himself from these actions.

* * *

After attending Asfandiyar Wali Khan's wedding I stopped briefly to visit my old school friend General Fazle Haq who was then serving as Governor of the NWFP. Over lunch he informed me that General Rahimuddin's appointment as Governor of Balochistan had officially been approved. Then he broached the idea of a national government. Zia, it seemed, now wished to have a cabinet composed solely of politicians. In his unofficial capacity as one of my oldest friends, Fazle Haq advised me not to be my 'obstinate self and join the proposed new government.

⁶²⁸ The extent of Khar's contacts with the Indian government were revealed in detail by one of his wives (Tehmina Durrani, *My Feudal Lord*, Lahore, 1991, pp. 138-50).

A week later on 16 March the NDP leadership met with the Zia-appointed Election Cell in Rawalpindi. Interestingly, the NDP was the first party to be so invited, and was represented by Begum "Wall Khan and myself. We also took along Abida Hussain, who had recently joined the NDP, with us to the meeting. Chandi, as she was better known, was the only child of an old family friend, the late Col. Abid Hussain. The Election Cell was headed by General Faiz Ali Chishti and included General (Retd.) Farman Ali, General Ihsanul Haq and General Jamal Said Mian, who happened to be another schoolmate of mine.

At the meeting General Chishti proposed the idea Of an interim government which would include all the main political parties of the original PNA. This interim government, according to Chishti, would remain until the long-awaited elections were held. He made it clear that NDP was the first party to be invited to join the new government. We were to disappoint him. As a party committed to the democratic process as the NDP was, and in view of the sacrifices of the hundreds who died during the PNA movement, it seemed unthinkable for us to join an unrepresentative government appointed under a state of Martial Law. Offering our regrets we declined the offer to join the federal cabinet.

The Wali Khans soon left for London and I was planning to take a holiday overseas as well. During the days of the Bhutto regime 'I had found it difficult to leave Pakistan, but now with the lull in political activities I thought it was an appropriate time to take a long overdue holiday. Fazle Haq insisted that I meet him prior to my departure, and accordingly on 20 April I visited him at Peshawar at his Governor's residence. Much to my surprise I learnt that General Zia was there as well. Over lunch Zia expressed his disappointment at my refusal to participate in the proposed national government. After lunch Zia announced that he was retiring for prayers leaving 'you two friends to have a chitchat'. After his departure Fazli, as I called him, opened up with me. He told me that he was angry and deeply disappointed with my refusal. Using emotive appeals of friendship, 'As a close friend I know what is better for you even more than you do', he tried hard to persuade me to change my mind. Once he realized that my mind had already been made up he was more conciliatory and even offered me a Diplomatic passport. Thanking him for the kind gesture I declined his friendly offer.

In May my wife Souriya and I went overseas. After stopovers at Hong Kong, Singapore, Perth and Sydney we arrived in New Zealand and were met by our son Shehryar who had recently completed his Bar and was working with a law firm in Auckland. Apart from New Zealand, where Pakistan had no diplomatic representation, at every port of call we were received at the airport by Pakistani diplomatic representatives. It appeared that they had been instructed by Islamabad to look after me. It certainly looked as if Zia was trying his utmost to oblige me. From Auckland we flew to the US where after a brief stop in Los Angeles we travelled to Washington where we were put up by our

ambassador Sahibzada Yakub Khan and his charming wife Tooba. Yakub Khan, to his credit, had established a good rapport with the US State Department and other members of the diplomatic community. He arranged a lunch for me at the White House which was hosted by a senior adviser to President Carter. At New York we stayed with our Consul General, Aziz Khan, an old Aitchisonian friend. Then, in London, another school friend, Aziz Sarfaraz, put his house at our disposal. We caught up with the Wali Khans and others.

While in London I learnt that on 5 July General Zia had announced a new Federal Cabinet among whom were six Muslim League members.⁶²⁹ Having been informed of this event by a correspondent of the BBC Urdu Service, I immediately issued a statement (which was then broadcast on the BBC) advising the Muslim League to either leave the government or face expulsion from the PNA. And in the event neither of these options were exercised then the NDP would consider resigning from the PNA.

I returned to Pakistan on 27 July to face a PNA dithering over its future role. Zia's initial proposal of forming a national government had met support within some of the PNA component parties. Mian Tufail of Jamaat-i-Islami had even gone on an extreme limb to announce 'that all political parties which refuse to accept a place in a nominated government should be banned, and should not be allowed to participate in the next general elections'.⁶³⁰ But at a meeting held in mid-June, in which the NDP represented by its acting-President Abdul Khaliq Khan made a strong opposing stand, the PNA remained divided on the issue. On 25 June General Zia declared in a national broadcast that he had dropped the idea of forming a national government. Ten days later, on 5 July, the Muslim League had joined hands with him.

Soon after my arrival I left for Islamabad to attend a special meeting of PNA leadership called by Mufti Mahmood. With the departure of Asghar Khan's Tehrik-i-Istiqal and Maulana Noorani's JUP there were only seven component parties left in the alliance. We met on 3 August at a hitjra in Rajah Bazaar, which was close to a mosque where Mufti Mahmood used to stay at Rawalpindi. The participants included Mufti Mahmood (JUI), Pir Pagaro (Muslim League), Mian Tufail and Professor Ghafoor Ahmed (Jamaat-i-Islami), Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan (POP), Ashraf Khan (Khaksar Tehrik) and Sirdar Qayum's brother (Muslim Conference). We soon got embroiled in a heated debate. Striking out at the Muslim League and accusing them of recklessly indulging in a self-serving stratagem, I demanded immediate resignations of its representatives in the

⁶²⁹ The Muslim League Ministers were: Fida Muhammad Khan (Housing and Works), Muhammad Khan Junejo (Railways), Muhammad Khan Hoti (Education, Culture and Tourism), Khawaja Muhammad Safdar (Food, Agriculture, Cooperatives and Livestock) Zahid Sarfaraz (Commerce) and Chaudhry Zahoor Ellahi (Labour Manpower, Local Government and Rural Development). Other Ministers included Mohyuddin of Kalat (Communication) Gul Muhammad Khan Jomezai (Water and Power) Mahmood Haroon (Interior) Sharifuddin Pirzada (Attorney General) and A. K. Brohi (Law and Parliamentary Affairs).

⁶³⁰ *Viewpoint*, Lahore, 18 June 1978, ('Between the Lines'), p. 5.

Federal Cabinet. Pir Pagaro insisted that his Muslim League ministers were so taken with their jobs that even if he asked them to resign they would not heed him. Therefore, given the circumstances, it was now impossible for him to change his party's unilateral stand. It had become apparent that Pir Pagaro had thrown in his lot with the generals. In the meantime Mian Tufail remained adamantly in favor of cooperating with the regime.

Faced with recalcitrant partners I tried to get them to see the folly of their stance. Zia and his coterie of generals and bureaucrats, I told them, would not allow the PNA to sway their decisions. The alliance continued to represent a potent political force as long as it maintained an independent stance but the moment it joined hands with the Martial Law regime it would lose all credibility and influence. I further remonstrated with them that Zia's postponement of his guaranteed elections was an ominous sign demonstrating unreliability and he was not to be trusted. I insisted a vote be taken and five out of the seven parties supported me in insisting that there be no participation in the military government. After leaving the meeting I publicly condemned the Muslim League for betraying its alliance with the PNA parties and demanded a firm election date from Zia.⁶³¹

The following day while I was at Peshawar attending an organizational meeting of the NDP, I was informed by a number of newspaper reporters that Mufti Mahmood had publicly announced that the PNA would soon be joining the Martial Law government. It came as a deep disappointment to me. The political fickleness of my colleagues had become abundantly obvious. It was time for NDP to take a stand.

[T]he NDP chief, Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, has implicitly threatened to quit the Alliance...Stating that his party would not join any cabinet through the back door, he remarked the Muslim League had stabbed the Alliance in the back by joining the Government and that his party would oppose any party that went the PNA way.⁶³²

Left with little option it was decided that the NDP would hold a national convention on 16 August at Karachi where its future participation in the PNA would be determined.

In the meantime other members of the PNA now began negotiating with the government on the terms of their participation. Subsequent reports of their dealings with Zia made for poor reading.

The PNA parties haggled over details. Each wanted a large share of the cabinet cake and preferred to nominate its own representatives. The issue was settled with General

⁶³¹ *Viewpoint*, Lahore, 13 August 1978, ('The Week'), p. 22.

⁶³² *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 August 1978, ('Early test for Zia Cabinet'). Hong Kong, p. 37.

Zia selecting the ministers through mutual consultations with party leaders. The allocation of cabinet seats and portfolios to each political party was the next hurdle. The party demands were heavy. The CMLA had already promised some ministries to non-PNA ministers and he desired a consensus on the allocation of other ministries. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan asked for three cabinet posts for his tiny Pakistan Democratic Party (POP). His colleagues smiled at his insistence. The CMLA offered two cabinet seats. He demanded one more. The pleasant atmosphere suddenly became tense. There was a hushed silence. General Zia's patience ran out. He looked around and said 'Well, I will be unfair to others if I accept your demand. I have stretched myself to the limit. It is for you to take it or leave it'. Nasrullah accepted the offer but declined to join the cabinet himself. Nasrullah had spent his political life in opposition, finding fault with every administration. He did not wish others to make him the butt of their criticism.⁶³³ Despite Nasrullah Khan's cooperation with the regime he was often subjected to Zia's scathing ridicule. Just ten days after the formation of the new government Zia publicly belittled him by announcing that 'Nasrullah Khan and all his PDF followers could fit comfortably in a single *tonga*'.⁶³⁴

The NDP national committee met at Karachi on 16 August, with Attaullah Mengal and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo participating for the first time. That day it was unanimously decided that the party would withdraw from the PNA alliance on the grounds that the PNA had betrayed its commitment to democracy by agreeing to participate in an unrepresentative martial law government.

On 23 August a new cabinet was sworn in. It included the following PNA members:

- Fida Muhammad Khan (Muslim League)
- Muhammad Khan Junejo (Muslim League)
- Muhammad Khan Hoti (Muslim League)
- Khawaja Muhammad Safdar (Muslim League)
- Zahid Sarfaraz (Muslim League)
- Choudhry Rehmat Ellahi (Jamaat-i-Islami)
- Professor Ghafoor Ahmed (Jamaat-i-Islami)
- Mehmood Azam Farooqi (Jamaat-i-Islami)
- Muhammad Zaman Khan Achakzai (JUI)
- Subuh Sadiq Khan Khoso (JUI)
- Iftikhar Ahmed Ansari (PDP)
- Muhammad Arshad Choudhry (PDP)

Their period in government lasted until 21 April 1979. During this short duration of eight months, real power continued to rest in the hands of the senior bureaucrats at the

⁶³³ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 157.

⁶³⁴ *Sadakat* (Urdu).

federal level and the Martial Law Administrators in the provinces. These civilian ministers were unable to properly carry out their functions even if they had wanted to. According to one writer

...the PNA ministers soon found out that the ruling Generals and senior civilian bureaucrats often by-passed them on important policy matters. This impaired the civilian ministers' ability to distribute patronage among their workers. The military rulers were disappointed by the intra-PNA squabbles and the ministers desire to work like a political government.⁶³⁵

In hindsight it appears certain that Zia used the aspiration for power among some of the PNA leaders to achieve his own ends. The issue undoubtedly at the top of Zia's agenda was Bhutto. The jailed PPP leader had been sentenced to death by the Lahore High Court in March 1978. The Supreme Court affirmed the High Court sentence in February 1979 and two months later, on 4 April, Bhutto was hanged. Clearly, Zia believed he needed visible support from a broad base of politicians to help him tide over this difficult and uncertain period.

On 23 March 1979, just twelve days before Bhutto's execution, Zia announced his intention of holding general elections in December. In April, shortly after Bhutto was safely in his grave, Zia informed the cabinet that those wishing to participate in the elections would have to resign at least three months before the polling date. General Arif states that this decision was not welcomed by the ministers.

Surprised, the ministers argued that, in a democracy, the cabinet stayed in power when elections were held. President Zia reminded them that during the Bhutto-PNA negotiations, the PNA itself had demanded that the government should resign before elections to demonstrate its impartiality. General Zia enquired if it would be morally correct for the PNA to renege on its own stand on the issue. Cornered, one of them said: If we have to resign around August, why not do so now? It would give us more time to prepare for the elections'.⁶³⁶

Having used the PNA politicians for his own purposes Zia had talked them into resigning from their cabinet posts in anticipation of the forthcoming elections. The politicians only realized they had been duped by Zia when the elections were once again 'postponed'.

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⁶³⁵ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military & Politics in Pakistan 1947-86*, op. cit., 236.

⁶³⁶ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 161.

The old Baloch leadership in NAP had not as yet joined the NDP. But as Bizenjo had said in June 1978, 'Although we have not yet joined the party there should be no doubt about our affinity with the NDP. Most of our old colleagues belong to the NDP'.⁶³⁷ Once NDP left the PNA fold in August 1978 a number of the 'progressive' members of the old NAP, who had held a deep-seated aversion to some of the parties of the Alliance, decided to join the party. Sadly, soon after serious problems emerged within the party.

In late August, Bizenjo, who was still not a NDP party member, made a very controversial public announcement in Lahore. He stated that Pakistan consisted of four nationalities, with each having a right of secession if its just demands were not met. Because of his close association with NDP it was unfortunately taken for granted by some members of the public and the Press that Bizenjo was simply reiterating the official NDP party line. It stirred up a hornet's nest and I was deluged with calls from all over the country. Finally I had to resort to issuing an official party clarification which flatly contradicted Bizenjo's contention. It stated that Pakistan had not been created on the basis of any nationality it was simply a question of muslim majority areas. And, that all four provinces were both multilingual and multiethnic. Hence, the issue of a province belonging to any potentially aggrieved nationality with ideas of secession could not even arise. Despite our open conflict of views Ghous Buksh Bizenjo came to Karachi shortly afterwards and joined the NDP. He let it be known that Attaullah Mengal would also be joining the party very shortly.

In mid-September 1978 Bizenjo accompanied me to Peshawar to attend the NDP national committee meeting. On our way Bizenjo expressed his desire to be appointed as the party's 'Chief Organizer'. I heard him out sympathetically but expressed my inability to make any appointments. The NDP, unlike most other parties, was run strictly on democratic principles. Party officials were elected to office by the members. Another problem that came to my mind was that in the party constitution there was no reference to any post of 'Chief Party Organizer'. Rather than disappoint Bizenjo, however, I mentioned to him that I would bring his request to the attention of senior party members and see if a solution could be found.

At Peshawar when I discussed Bizenjo's request with Wali Khan, Arbab Sikandar Khalil, and a handful of other senior party members, their response was not particularly positive. Wali Khan felt that Bizenjo's demand was quite unreasonable. He said, 'If I can work in the party as an ordinary member, why can't he?' Later in front of the party working committee that had gathered there, Wali Khan openly rebuked Bizenjo for his backdoor approach. 'If you wish to stand for a party position', Wali Khan coldly told him, 'just put your name up at the party elections being held in November'. Not surprisingly, Bizenjo was extremely upset at his public humiliation and began nursing a

⁶³⁷ *Viewpoint*, Lahore. 18 June 1978, ('Bizenjo on National Crisis'), p. 8.

feeling of deep grievance. Over the next few months he began lobbying the more leftist party members and actively began spreading seeds of rebellion.

I was deeply saddened by the whole episode. I had been elected President of NDP during some very trying times when Bhutto had been at the very peak of his power. Later in December 1977 when Wali Khan was out of his confinement I had publicly proposed that he take over the party leadership, which I believed was his by right of seniority and precedence. Besides, I was keen to step down now that my task had been achieved. Wali Khan was insistent that I stay on, and it was solely because of him that I did. As an experienced politician Bizenjo had his own ambitions but it seemed that very few of his former NAP colleagues had faith in him.

It had become apparent that Wali Khan had little trust left in Bizenjo; During their prolonged incarceration in Hyderabad Jail deep suspicions had been raised about Bizenjo's loyalties. But Wali Khan was far from being the only one who now disliked Bizenjo. In October 1978 when the senior leadership of NDP had gathered for a meeting at Quetta, a number of us were invited by Khair Buksh Marri for lunch. Bizenjo who had pointedly been left out from the invitation list had nevertheless insisted upon 'gate-crashing' the small affair. While Khair Buksh Marri carefully observed the Baloch protocol of hospitality he made reference to Bizenjo's unwanted presence by making a calculated curt remark to his staff about the shortage of plates. 'Why is it that when we invited seven guests, we need eight plates?' The message was not lost on the others who were present. Despite the underlying insult Bizenjo braved through the meal without any sign of outward emotion.

At the time of the November NDP party elections I had decided to step down from the post of party president and spoke to Wali Khan of my intention. Once again he was not keen to take charge of the party and despite my resistance insisted that I continue. It was a pity that Attaullah Mengal had still to join the party otherwise both Wali Khan, who had a strong liking for the Mengal Sirdar, and I, would have happily nominated him for the post. With the lack of alternative candidates I was obliged to continue, at least until the next party presidential elections which were scheduled for mid-1979.

By early 1979 serious divisions had been created in the party by pockets of hardened progressives whose actions we all suspected were being orchestrated by Bizenjo and his small coterie of political extremists.⁶³⁸ When Attaullah Mengal finally joined the party in March 1979, he unfortunately did so as part of Bizenjo's strategy. Rather than help soothe matters, the situation only became even further inflamed. A commentator writing in the *Pakistan Economist* best summed up the situation that prevailed at that time.

⁶³⁸ Interestingly among this band of self-styled 'progressives' was Abida Hussain, today very much a stalwart of the conservative Nawaz Sharif Muslim League.

The basic differences between the 'moderates' led by Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, vice-president Begum Nasim Wali Khan...and the 'extremists' led by Mr. Bizenjo, Sardar Mengal and Qaswar Gardezi appeared to have cropped up on several points, including the nature of the party's organization, autonomy, secularism and the rights of nationalities.

The moderates wanted the party to be a mass-organization - open to all sections of society. The extremists wanted it to be a worker's party in which the presidents and secretaries will have the authority and powers to admit or expel any person from the organization. The question of granting maximum autonomy to federating units was the bone of contention. Bizenjo and Mengal wanted the federation to be left with only three subjects - defence, foreign affairs and currency. The remaining subjects should be administered by the federating units. They wanted unfettered authority with federating units which is nowhere comprehensible. On the other hand, the moderates, while claiming autonomy, wanted safeguards written into the constitution, against intrusion of the Federal authority in specified areas of control of federating units.

The myth of four nationalities propounded by Bizenjo, Mengal and their fellow-travellers generated heat more than any issue in the country. Mazari and his group contended that the NDP was committed to bringing about an 'honorable settlement' of the issue of provincial autonomy and removing all grievances of the four provinces according to the party manifesto. They claimed that there was no mention in the NDP's manifesto of four nationalities or four languages or equal representation for all in the National Assembly or the services ... [t]he extremists insisted, however, that there were four nationalities in the country and that their 'rights' needed to be ensured to them.⁶³⁹

By April 1979 the party national committee decided that the only way out of the quagmire was to dismiss all party officials and committees and call for fresh elections across the board convinced as we were that full-fledged democracy was far better than making forced concessions to back-room intrigues. Faced with defeat in party elections the Bizenjo faction, with Attaullah Mengal now unfortunately in the lead, stormed out of the party after making angry accusations against me for being a pawn of the military regime. I was deeply hurt by these actions, particularly by those of Attaullah Mengal, whom I had always liked. The whole idea of creating the NDP had been based upon on correcting injustices done to my friends in Balochistan and the NAP. While I tried to respond to what I felt was a betrayal by trusted colleagues, Begum Naseem Wali Khan proved to be more vocal in my defence.

⁶³⁹ *Pakistan Economist*, 29 April-5 May 1978 (National Scene-Split in NDP).

Asked about the allegations that Mr. Mazari had the blessings of Islamabad, Begum Wali Khan said that the NDP did not believe in bargaining and added that if it wanted to be purchased it could have done so during the time when these [two] leaders were in jail. The NDP could have sought the blessings of the Government at a time when Mr. Bhutto used to send emissaries for such a bargain.

She said that these leaders were fully aware of the fact that the NDP left no stone unturned to get them released. It was an insult to themselves if they charged their own party with having any link with Islamabad. She said that in fact such charges were levelled against all those who stood behind Sardar Mazari.

Asked if there was any chance of bringing them back to NDP. She said ... that their absence would hardly matter as the NDP had been formed without their presence.⁶⁴⁰

In retrospect it appears obvious that what had been attempted had been little more than a Marxist-type party take-over, which, had it succeeded, would have established a politburo-led party organization. A number of us were aware that Bizenjo had been a card carrying communist since his youth but perhaps we misjudged his ambitions. While he used Attaullah Mengal when it suited him, he displayed little loyalty towards him. During the brief period of party strife Bizenjo would try and play both sides. On occasion he would become privately critical of his colleague and defender. After one particular incident which occurred only a day before their departure from the NDP, Bizenjo was to tell me, 'Please don't mind Attaullah. Try to be patient with him. This was no way for him to behave as you are also Sirdar like him. You see he was born and nurtured in Las Bela and went to school in Karachi. He has acquired a tendency to behave more like a Sindhi Wadera rather than a Baloch Sirdar that he is'.

Six months later, in October 1979, I received a call from Khair Buksh Marri who happened to be on a rare visit to Karachi prior to his departing for a prolonged period of self-exile in Kabul. He told me that he 'wanted to eat ice-cream' made at my house. Over lunch followed by ice-cream Khair Buksh tried to absolve the actions of his friend Attaullah Mengal. 'I know that you've been deeply hurt by his behavior', he said to me, 'we both know that Attaullah is a decent person but prone to being emotional and volatile. He was used. Bizenjo exploited him for his own purposes'.

* * *

By late 1978 Zia had gained confidence in his abilities. Months earlier his regime had been accorded full legal recognition by the Supreme Court in the Nusrat Bhutto Case. In

⁶⁴⁰ *Dawn*, Karachi, 20 April 1978.

September 1978, with the resignation of Choudhry Fazal Ellahi, Zia had also gained the office of President for himself. With the passage of time he had developed a degree of contempt for the politicians who besieged him for official positions and favors. During a trip to Teheran Zia revealed his personal feelings at a press conference:

What is a constitution? It is a booklet with ten or twelve pages. I can tear them away and say that from tomorrow we shall live under a different system. Today the people will follow wherever I lead. All the politicians including the once mighty Mr. Bhutto will follow me with their tails wagging.⁶⁴¹

I was offended by the arrogance of the statement and shortly afterwards in October that year, during a joint meeting of political leaders with Zia, I took him to task for making it. He hedged at first, 'Sirdar Sahib, you know how the Press misrepresents things'. When I persisted, he responded with a conspiratorial smile and added, 'The remarks were not directed towards you at all, you should know that, please believe me'. He then waved his arms around openly hinting that his intended targets were seated among us. Not particularly satisfied with his answer I said, 'Well, I demand a public retraction'. Zia then promised to make an official contradiction to the Teheran statement. In the presence of the assembled political leaders he directed General Arif to have it issued to the Press at the earliest opportunity. But the official contradiction - never appeared. I resolved not to meet Zia after that. The assumption that politicians were following Zia 'with their tails wagging' had infuriated me.

In March 1979 I was invited by Zia to attend the Pakistan Day Parade at Islamabad which was to be followed by a Presidential banquet. I declined the invitation. Later attempts were made through two friends of mine, General Fazle Haq and General Jehanzeb Baghdada, who visited me to try and persuade me to change my mind. Their visits had little effect. I was determined not to meet Zia and stood my ground despite the blandishments of my good friends. Before leaving, Fazle Haq decided to forewarn me about the issue that was hanging like a black cloud over Pakistan at that time: the fate of Zulfikar All Bhutto. He announced 'It is all over for Bhutto'. Brutally frank about his likes and dislikes, as he was known to be, Fazle Haq then added, 'The decision has been taken. They'll be hanging the bastard very soon'.

* * *

By the time of his execution most of Bhutto's lieutenants had deserted him. Shortly after the coup the PPP had openly split into two factions and according to Raja Anwar, then a PPP activist and Bhutto family loyalist:

⁶⁴¹ *Kayhan International*, Tehran, 18 September 1978.

The right wing was formed by former federal minister Maulana Kausar Niazi, former Sindh Chief Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Kamal Azfar. They opposed Begum Nusrat Bhutto's confrontationist stance and advocated a working arrangement with the army. This faction believed that the party's leadership belonged in the hands of someone like Jatoi, who did not upset the army...⁶⁴²

While his party was fragmenting, Bhutto had been found guilty by the Lahore High Court largely on evidence provided by approvers. The leading approvers were none other than Bhutto's own right-hand men, Masood Mahmood, the former head of the FSF, and Saied Ahmed Khan, Bhutto's Chief Security Officer. While there might have been strong grounds to believe that Bhutto was guilty as charged, to my mind the trial was not a particularly fair one. During the trial the judges, who are expected to behave impartially at all times, often assumed the role of the prosecution. As John Mathews, Queen's Counsel, a British lawyer present at the trial commented:

I was concerned at the way a witness's favorable answer [in Bhutto's defence] would be subject to an immediate interruption from the Bench, who would take over the witness, and cause him to whittle down or change his answer. None of this would be recorded by the typist contemporaneously, but ultimately the court would dictate to the typist the original question and the final answer, which frequently bore no resemblance to that which the witness had first said.⁶⁴³

Mathews also mentioned that he noticed the antagonism of the Court towards Bhutto, in particular the 'outbursts' of Chief Justice Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain, who had twice been superseded under Bhutto's regime.

The High Court Judgment was appealed in the Supreme Court which heard the petition over a period of many months. Of the nine original judges, one retired on 30 July 1978 and a second withdrew because of ill-health. By the time the appeal was dismissed on 6 February 1979, only seven Supreme Court judges remained on the bench. The verdict confirming the death sentence had been split by the narrowest of margins: 4-3.

Bhutto's lawyers filed a review petition to the Supreme Court on behalf of Bhutto and the four other convicts. The review petition was rejected by the Court on 24 March. On 31 March Bhutto's older sister submitted a mercy petition to Zia, who as Head of State had the power to commute a death sentence.⁶⁴⁴ It fell upon deaf ears. Within twenty-four hours Zia hastily rejected the mercy petition. When it finally dawned upon Bhutto and his family that execution was imminent, Nusrat Bhutto tried in vain to meet with Zia, who instead fobbed her off to Major-General Saghir Hussain Syed, the martial law

⁶⁴² Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, op. cit., p. 22.

⁶⁴³ Victoria Schofield, *Trial and Execution*, Cassel. London, 1979, p. 46.

⁶⁴⁴ Shaharbano Imtiaz was actually Bhutto's half-sister.

administrator of Rawalpindi. It was to no avail. In the early hours of the morning Bhutto was hanged to death.

That night I had received a telephone call from Fazle Haq telling me that Bhutto's death sentence was to be carried out before sunrise. Distraught, I found myself unable to sleep. During the long hours of darkness I thought about the man I had known and the promise that he had held upon assumption of power in the dismal days of December 1971. In the end his selfish and brutal pursuit of absolute power had led to his undoing. He had engineered his own doom. His arrogance and vindictiveness had made him many enemies. Now that he was down even his few remaining self-styled friends and his political associates had deserted him and scampered for cover. The only people who had come in the streets to support him were his young street disciples who still believed in the dreams that he had spun around them. These were the wretched poor, who never having known him at close hand, had worshipped him from afar. Whatever bitterness I had felt towards Bhutto had dissipated soon after his arrest. It is hard to despise a man once he becomes a victim himself. Then as the night passed and the early glimmer of dawn emerged across the darkened sky, I knew that Bhutto was no more. My thoughts then turned to his widow and children, and the anguish that now faced them. A few hours later that morning I sent a telegram to Nusrat Bhutto offering her my deepest sympathy.

Unlike some of my former colleagues in the PNA I could not endorse the execution. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* later reported

In an interview soon after the hanging, Zia remarked: The higher you fly, the harder you fall.' He added that in ordering Bhutto's execution he had acted in the best interests of Pakistan. His closest political collaborator, the Jamaat-i-Islami, distributed sweets in accordance with the local custom to mark a happy occasion and, though he said it is improper to rejoice over the death of anyone, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan chief Maulana Noorani said the execution was well-deserved.

Other adversaries were more charitable. The NDP president, Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, said that as a long-time friend of Bhutto, he was grieved by his death, which had ended all his differences with the late politician...⁶⁴⁵

Ever since her husband's arrest in late 1977 Nusrat Bhutto had been trying to launch a movement against the martial law regime without much success. As the political activist and the former Bhutto family loyalist Raja Anwar later wrote:

[Nusrat Bhutto's] tactic was to deflate the popular fear of martial law's excesses by planning a series of voluntary arrests every day in Lahore and extending

⁶⁴⁵ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 April 1979, ('Things Will Never Be the Same Again'), Hong Kong, p. 11.

them to other cities as time passed. She drew a list of five or six hundred party leaders said to be willing to court arrest and thus set in motion a campaign that would eventually lead to full-scale opposition to martial law. As was to be expected, most of these leaders were former ministers, prospective legislative candidates and members of the PPP Central Executive Committee favored by the Bhutto family. The first man to volunteer was the retired General Tikka Khan in Lahore's Anarkali area. The next day, not one volunteer set foot in the public domain. It turned out that most PPP leaders had phoned the police and requested to be collected from their homes...the movement Begum Bhutto wanted to launch had backfired on the launching pad.⁶⁴⁶

It appeared that none of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's erstwhile lieutenants possessed the courage to lead a movement against the army. In the words of Raja Anwar, then Nusrat Bhutto 'swallowed her disappointment and decided to launch a secret cell [Al-Nusrat] within the PPP to take up the fight against Zia' but in the end the PPP proved to be

... incapable either of organizing mass voluntary arrests or running Al-Nusrat, its phantom secret arm and this thwarted Begum Bhutto in between 1977 and 1978. The army regime traded on PPP's paralysis to peddle the impression both at home and abroad that there was absolute peace in the country...⁶⁴⁷

There was little protest in Pakistan after the execution. The general public response to Bhutto's hanging was surprisingly muted. A number of leaderless PPP activists, still at large in cities such as Lahore and Gujranwala, made an attempt to protest, but even their activities lasted only a day or two. Soon it was all over. Bhutto was dead and Zia was now firmly in power.

Once reassured that there would be no severe public unrest as a result of Bhutto's execution, Zia proceeded with his plans. The first of these was to get rid of the 'extra baggage' of politicians that he had been carrying in his federal cabinet. On the pretext of holding elections on 17 November, he now talked them into resigning so that they could commence with their election campaigns. Having once again announced general elections for November Zia now set about altering the ground rules to favor his own position. Moves were now afoot to amend the Constitution to give more powers to the President and the army. And, in direct contradiction of all that Mr. Jinnah had proudly espoused, he also now wished to placate the religious lobby by introducing separate electorates for Muslims and non-Muslims. These efforts were vociferously opposed by a number of politicians including myself.

⁶⁴⁶ Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, op. cit., p. 25.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Mr. Mazari ... reiterated his party's stand on the question of constitutional amendments and commented that the NDP was against the opening of a Pandora's box.

He said only an elected Parliament had the right to discuss constitutional amendments such as the division of powers between the President and the Premier and a separate electorate.

He [further] said that as far as the role of the army in politics was concerned the NDP was the only party that had stated in its manifesto categorically that there was no role for the army in politics.⁶⁴⁸

Having once again promised to hold elections, Zia, still wary of the PPP's support within Punjab and Sindh, wished to test the political waters in advance. Nusrat and Benazir Bhutto had been under house arrest but Zia remained very unsure about the support they continued to hold in the country. In May 1979 he announced the holding of 'non-party' local bodies elections prior to the general elections scheduled for November. The NDP took a lead in criticizing this new step. It appeared obvious to us that, in the absence of political parties, the polls would be controlled by the bureaucracy - in other words by the martial law regime. Convinced that Zia's personal obsession with the PPP was proving counter-productive to the national interest, I began becoming openly supportive of the PPP by publicly demanding that the party be accepted in the mainstream of national politics and its leaders be immediately released.⁶⁴⁹ And, I insisted that it would be totally wrong for the regime to defer elections because of its uneasiness over the PPP's political strength.⁶⁵⁰

On 22 July Zia proposed to all political parties that a proportional representation system be used in the coming elections as opposed to the traditional 'first past the post' system. The majority of political parties including the PPP, Tehrik-i-Istiqlal and the NDP strongly objected to this latest proposal. Dissatisfied with his lack of success in remodelling the political system, Zia adopted a more aggressive method. In a national broadcast on 30 August 1979, when most people were expecting him to announce the revival of political activities in the country, Zia instead announced the arbitrary amendment of the Political Parties Act of 1962. The new amendment called for:

- (a) registration of political parties with the Election Commission as a prerequisite for taking part in national elections,
- (b) submission of accounts of the party to the Election Commission for scrutiny,

⁶⁴⁸ *The Muslim*, Islamabad, 21 May 1979.

⁶⁴⁹ *Dawn*, Karachi, 23 May 1979.

⁶⁵⁰ *Dawn*, Karachi, 15 June 1979.

- (c) publication of a formal manifesto,
- (d) holding of annual elections for the office bearers of the party, and
- (e) submission of a list of office bearers and ordinary members to the Election Commission.⁶⁵¹

The amendment also made it an offence for political parties to criticize either the Army or the judiciary. As the judiciary were already protected by the law of contempt, this added protection made little sense other than for Zia to use the judiciary's name to slip in protection for the armed forces, in other words, for himself.

The NDP was the first political party to publicly reject this amendment to the Political Parties Act. We refused to register our party with the Election Commission insisting that the amendment was unlawful, and we called upon other parties to join us in our boycott. Our appeal went largely unheeded. In the end eighteen parties applied for registration, a number of which, such as Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith and Pakistan Christian National Party, were of little consequence. While the PPP had been effectively debarred from the outset, the Election Commission disqualified a number of parties which had applied. The disqualified parties included Nawabzada Nasrullah's PDP and Muhammad Ashrafs Khaksar Party, both members of PNA. Those that were declared eligible for the elections included Asghar Khan's Tehrik-i-Istiqlal, Pir Pagaro's Muslim League, Mufti Mahmood's JUI, Maulana Noorani's JUP, Kausar Niazi's Progressive People's Party and the Jamaat-i-Islami. The parties that had refused to register were Bizenjo's Pakistan National Party (PNP) and the NDP.

The local bodies elections were held in mid-September and voters came out to enter their ballots. While most parties had publicly refused to participate in these elections, a number of them put up their candidates under pseudonymous parties, such as the PPP's A warn Dost. The result of these elections proved to be contrary to the regime's expectations. According to one historian:

Despite the negative response of the political parties the military authorities went ahead with the local bodies polls. Much to their dismay a large number of people having ties with political parties, especially the PPP, got elected. The success of the pro-People's Party candidates alarmed the military government which saw this as an indication of how the party might perform in the upcoming elections.⁶⁵²

⁶⁵¹ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military & Politics in Pakistan 1947-86*, op. cit., 231.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

The concern of the regime was reflected in the manner in which the nomination papers of candidates for the general elections were scrutinized. Normally once a candidate's papers had been accepted the only means available to challenge was through an election petition. The right of appeal to the Returning Officer was only available to the candidate whose papers had been rejected. These rules were suddenly changed. As the *Viewpoint* commented at that time

...this time appeals have been heard against the acceptance of nomination papers as well, and this unleashed an intensive hunt for people suspected of any connections with the PPP hiding under the label of independent.⁶⁵³

In a mockery of legal process many candidates were not only questioned about their own political sympathies but also about those of their fathers, sons and other family members.

While the NDP kept out of the election process it maintained a steady campaign of public criticism against the military regime, insisting that polls should only be held under the Constitution of 1973. In early October 1979 I was invited by Zia to meet with him 'to discuss the current political situation'. Our meeting took place on 6 October at Rawalpindi during which I sensed that he was once more looking for a pretext to call off the elections. He mentioned 'his fear that a weak political government would not be able to sustain the mounting foreign pressure against Pakistan's nuclear programme'. My response to him was bluntly put.

[Sherbaz Mazari] said that he told the President in clear terms that his party wanted elections under the 1973 Constitution. The decision of his party's National Committee, regarding amendments in the Political Parties Act and introduction of Proportional Representation was final. There would be no compromise on these basic principles, he added.

Elaborating his talks with the President about holding of elections on Nov. 17, Mr. Mazari said the President pointed out certain difficulties in this regard but he made it quite clear to the President, that whatever the case may be, *his party would never favor the idea of postponing the polls.*

He said, 'We have repeatedly announced that elections without major political parties would be nothing more than a farce. How can we be party to such a hoax'. All major parties he added should be allowed to take part in the elections.

He said, 'We are prepared to accept the verdict of the people even if it is against us. The stand of our party remains that no unrepresentative government has the

⁶⁵³ *Viewpoint*, Lahore, 14 October 1979, ('The Great PPP Hunt'), p. 13.

right to amend the Constitution which was unanimously approved by all political parties of the country, he added.

The NDP leader also opposed the holding of elections under separate electorates and described it against the Constitution. He said his party would never accept the amendment to the Political Parties Act under which the criticism of the Judiciary and the Army was prohibited.

'As long as the Army was ruling the country, it can never be exempted from criticism'.⁶⁵⁴

Ten days later, on 16 October 1979, Zia called off the elections. He also banned all political parties and imposed strict Press censorship. A new amendment was made by Presidential decree to the Constitution. The new Article 22-A provided for military courts and tribunals for trial of offences punishable under the Martial Law regulations. The judiciary was expressly debarred from entertaining any appeals against decisions made by these military courts and tribunals.

But luck was with Zia, Little over a month later the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan to overthrow Hafizullah Amin's regime. Pakistan had now become a front-line state in the Cold War between the rival superpowers. The United States government found itself committed to propping up the Pakistani military dictatorship with a massive supply of funds and weaponry in pursuance of its own global interests. Zia exploited this new found status fully to the hilt.

* * *

In Pakistan Zia's credibility was in ruins. Having twice announced and then cancelled elections his standing was at an all-time low. Only the might of the army and the divisions within the political parties enabled him to continue unchecked. Nevertheless, as one of his closest advisors, General Arif, later admitted:

With elections on the backburner, it was time to consolidate his power base. General Zia was in no hurry to hold elections, but he also faced the pressures and disadvantages of running an administration without the people's participation. The allegation of being a non-elected ruler weighed heavily on him.⁶⁵⁵

On 28 February 1980 I received a call from Zia's Military Secretary informing me that the President wished to meet with me in Islamabad. By now completely disenchanted with the military leader, I replied that I had no desire to meet with the CMLA. Zia's

⁶⁵⁴ *The Muslim*, Islamabad, 7 October 1979.

⁶⁵⁵ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*. op. cit., p. 215.

broken promise over his Teheran statement still rankled me. Interestingly enough, a week later I received a visit from a team of senior Jamaat-i-Islami leaders - Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, Azam Farooqui and Munawar Hassan. All of them now wholeheartedly approved of my refusal to meet with Zia. The party that had until very recently been Zia's staunchest supporters was now openly referring to him as a vile hypocrite.

On 12 March we were all to discover from BBC World Service that about twenty or so young army officers had been arrested in Lahore on charges of attempting to topple the military government. It was only much later we learnt that these naive officers had placed their trust in Ghulam Mustafa Khar, who had arranged, quite unbeknownst to them, with the Indian Government to provide them with weapons. One of Khar's trusted middlemen, the notorious smuggler Seth Abid, is reputed to have spilled the beans to the military authorities.⁶⁵⁶

The next approach I received from Zia was through my friend Fazle Haq, then governor of NWFP. He arrived on 16 August on a special plane from Peshawar at the express behest of his army chief. Zia now wished NDP to form the core of a new national government at the centre. According to my old school friend, the prime minister's job was mine for the asking. I candidly replied that it was impossible for me to comply with his request for, two simple reasons, the first being that the NDP party constitution forbade any party office holder from holding any other official position of any capacity, and the other reason was that the NDP's National Committee had decided that the party would not participate in any unrepresentative government. Then Fazli (as he was known to his friends), looking visibly irritated at my lack of cooperation said, 'Well, if you seem so determined then I'll go to London and offer the job to Wali Khan instead'. I told him that he could do as he pleased, but at the same time warned him that Wali Khan was bound by the decision of the party's national committee as well. 'So what are you going to do if he accepts my offer?' he asked me disdainfully. My reply seemed to shock him. I told him that I would sack Wali Khan from the party. Principles were more important than personalities in the NDP. After our heated exchange I refused to join him for dinner. Later a mutual school friend of ours, Colonel Nasr, insisting that friendships superseded politics, requested me to join him and Fazli over dinner. Despite our regular differences of opinion, my friendship with Fazli was never to suffer again.

A year earlier he had told me over lunch at Governor's House at Peshawar that my rigid adherence to principles made me 'a liability in politics'. According to him Zia held me in respect and would happily make me an ambassador to Washington or London. With his usual mischievous glint in his eye, Fazli reckoned that I would be 'a much more successful ambassador any day than as a politician'. I laughed off his suggestion but

⁶⁵⁶ Tehmina Durrani, *My Feudal Lord*, op. cit., p. 149. It is said that aft this event Zia felt himself indebted to Seth Abid. As a consequence the smuggler became 'above' the law for many years that followed.

was at the same time aware that the offer was serious and could only have come from the CMLA himself. Over the years Fazli would make me other offers, including once a governorship of any province of my choosing. I, of course, declined all offers much to Fazli's tut-tuttings and accusations of being too stubborn for my own good.

After my meeting with him in Karachi, Fazle Haq flew straight to London to make his offer to Wali Khan. To my knowledge Wali Khan thought over it and then informed Fazle Haq that he would accept the offer subject to party approval provided two prior conditions were met; the first being that the state of martial law be withdrawn within six months, a national government be formed and these conditions be made public on television. His second condition was that upon assumption of office he could address the nation guaranteeing general elections under the 1973 Constitution. In essence, what Wali Khan wanted was to create a temporary caretaker government which would help return democracy to the country. Neither of his conditions proved acceptable to Zia and the offer was then hastily withdrawn.

The same offer was then made to Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi.⁶⁵⁷ On 10 September he visited me in Karachi with an invitation for the NDP to join a national government headed by him. I took the opportunity of telling him of the earlier offer made to the NDP, which had now been passed to him. Jatoi appeared to have no reservations about working under martial law and was preoccupied with the task of creating his national government. I regretted his offer and informed him of NDP's inability to join any unrepresentative government. Then Jatoi made a serious miscalculation. He secretly arranged to meet his friend Ghulam Mustafa Khar in Dubai to seek his advice on the proposed national government, while ostensibly on his way to Umra. Zia who was aware of Khar's supervisory role in the recent failed *coup* attempt, soon got wind of Jatoi's secret meeting through his intelligence agencies. By now Zia hated Khar with unparalleled vehemence.⁶⁵⁸ The chances of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi becoming Prime Minister vanished overnight.⁶⁵⁹

Towards the end of 1980 as I was preparing for my eldest son Sherazam's wedding I was telephoned by my friend Fazle Haq from Peshawar. After the usual pleasantries he got to the point. He indicated that his chief, General Zia, had expressed a wish to be invited to my son's wedding. I replied that I planned to invite only family, friends and political associates, and as Zia fitted in none of the categories, I did not plan on inviting him. Irritated by my refusal, Fazli then presented me with an 'ultimatum'. He said that

⁶⁵⁷ Diary entry: 15 July 1986. This was confirmed to me by Mahmood Haroon who told me that he was the one who had taken the offer to Jatoi and it had been accepted without the imposition of any preconditions.

⁶⁵⁸ Majid Nizami (of the *Nawa-i-Waqt* group of newspapers) related that once during a trip to London Khar begged him to intercede with Zia on his behalf and plead for forgiveness. According to Nizami when he broached the topic with Zia, it was the only time he had ever witnessed Zia break into an impassioned outburst and openly use four-letter language. It was all directed at the absent Khar.

⁶⁵⁹ This episode is corroborated by General Arif (General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 216).

he would attend the wedding only if Zia was invited, otherwise he would be boycotting the wedding. I told my friend that he could do as he pleased. In the end the irrepressible Fazle Haq and his wife flew to Karachi and attended the wedding. As he embraced to congratulate me on the occasion, he laughingly berated me by telling me that I was 'a loveable but obstinate fool'. He warned me that I had succeeded in irritating Zia yet again.

Over the years I believe my friend Fazle Haq was much maligned. He was regularly accused of being involved in the illegal narcotics trade and on one occasion a foreign magazine mentioned him by name as a suspected drug smuggler. Fazle Haq had made it abundantly clear that he viewed the foreign addict as the ultimate cause of the drug trade and that he saw no reason why the NWFP should not profit from this overseas demand. This attitude undoubtedly irritated the US and other Western powers. But I am convinced he had no direct hand in the illegal trade. As an old school friend I could risk directly asking him about the rumors circulating about him, and on one occasion I did. He replied that the gossip about him had started when a close relative of his was caught red-handed with a large consignment of drugs. His family had then exerted pressure on him to have his relative released. Quoting the old adage 'God gives us relatives but we are luckily able to choose our own friends', he said that he had been left with little choice but to let 'the bloody bastard' go scot-free and then added bitterly, 'And, now I'm stuck with this cursed reputation and there is little I can do about it to make it go away'.

As a friend I believed him and later evidence corroborated my belief. Just before his tragic assassination Fazli visited Karachi. He was in poor health and was visiting a local hospital for a medical checkup. When I visited him he was discussing business matters with Aitizaz Shahbaz, then head of Burmah Shell Limited. It appeared that Fazli held the directorship of a lubricant blending plant which was being managed by Burmah Shell. In my presence he told Aitizaz Shahbaz that he was upset that the director's fees had been cut by Rs 4000 and pleaded with him to reconsider the move as he was having difficulties making ends meet. The question worth asking is: would someone supposedly involved in a multimillion activity be so perturbed at the loss of a few thousand rupees? My answer is most definitely not.

Fazli had a remarkably unrestrained personality. He had a gift for humor and possessed a form of bluntness rarely witnessed in Pakistan. Undoubtedly his aptitude for plain speaking made him powerful enemies who would make life difficult for him in his final years. But he had unchallengeable qualities as a friend, loyalty being foremost of them. With me he often behaved as if we were still at military school, laughing, joking and swearing like a trooper. Once at a wedding function, while seated at a high table alongside General Zia and other governors, Fazli noticed me among the guests. According to others present he excused himself by saying pointedly to Zia, 'As my

friend Sherbaz will probably not be welcome here, I'd prefer to sit with him elsewhere'. He left Zia and spent the evening chatting instead with me at my table.

* * *

By now most people had seen through Zia's pretensions. The facade of elections lay completely exposed. At a meeting of NDP's national executive committee, held on 20 August 1980 at my house in Karachi, a resolution was passed giving 'full authority to me as the President of the Party to contact the leadership of other political parties in the country to exchange ideas and to coordinate a joint effort for the restoration of democracy, rule of law, civil liberties, socio-economic and political justice and provincial rights'.⁶⁶⁰ It called for a united political stand against the martial law regime. We then sent our provincial party leaders to call on the leaders of all political parties with a request to make a joint political grouping for the revival of democracy. This was the first step towards the formation of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) formed some six months later.

Shortly after Wali Khan's return from London in early October, Mufti Mahmood arrived in Karachi to meet with us. On 13 October he expressed a keen desire for a reconciliation between the NDP and his JUI. His discussions with Wali Khan and me went very amiably. Expressing his regret at participating in the martial law government, he complained that his supporters had pushed him into a corner. Inundated with their requests for jobs, transfers and other forms of political preferments, he had then felt the only way to satisfy them was through gaining ministries.⁶⁶¹ He also confessed that he was now convinced that Zia was a religious hypocrite and used him to achieve his own purposes. The following day Wali Khan and I paid a return courtesy call on the JUI leader. As soon as we returned to my house after our meeting, we received a telephone call informing us that Mufti sahib had died. We immediately returned to the mosque where he had been praying at the time of his death. It was indeed a sad occasion. I had known Mufti Mahmood for many years and had found him to be a cut above most other politicians. He had always been a sincere and good man at heart.

The NDP's efforts to find common ground among the political parties was proving to be a success. A number of political leaders had expressed their support of the idea. In the first week of December Pyar Ali Allana presented me with a draft agreement for discussion purposes. The NDP had proposed that the new political movement should have four basic demands: the lifting of martial law, restoration of Constitution of 1973 in its original unamended form, elections held under the unamended Constitution and

⁶⁶⁰ Excerpt from the resolution passed by the National Executive of the National Democratic Party on 20 August 1980.

⁶⁶¹ Mufti Mahmood protested that during his meetings he was accosted favor-seeking supporters even when he would head for the lavatory. There had been no respite for him, he complained, from his party men.

the creation of greater provincial autonomy (with only foreign affairs, defence, communications and currency remaining with the federal government). The PPP was not happy about our demand for the original unamended Constitution, and instead proposed that we accept the Constitution as it stood on 4 July 1977, the time of Zia's coup. The NDP rejected this demand outright. We maintained that the only form of the Constitution acceptable to us was the original one which was passed unanimously by all political parties, and not the one that had been deliberately tampered by Bhutto.

Over a period of two months the cause of our disagreement continued to be the Constitution. The NDP continued to reject a series of revised draft agreements sent by the PPP. Nusrat Bhutto could not help but view our rejection of all Bhutto orchestrated constitutional amendments as implicit criticism of her late husband's governance. But on 5 February I finally received an agreement accepting the original untampered Constitution of 1973 with Nusrat Bhutto's signature on the document. I then affixed my signature and returned the document to Pyar Ali Allana. And, so the MRD was formed. It had been agreed that the following morning representatives of other opposition parties would meet at 70 Clifton and officially join MRD by also affixing their signatures to the agreement. Present at the meeting were Mahmood Ali Kasuri (representing Tehrik-i-Istiqal)? Maulana Fazlur Rehman (who had now replaced his father as head of JUI), Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan (representing his PDP), Khawaja Khairuddin and Malik Qasim (representing their faction of the Muslim League), Sirdar Qayum Khan (Muslim Conference), Nusrat Bhutto and Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Nusrat Bhutto requested that we allow Mairaj Muhammad of Quami Mahaz Azadi and Fatehyab Ali of the Mazdoor Kissan Party (Afzal Bangash faction) to participate in the meeting. She was also keen that three or four other minor Sindhi nationalist parties (the names of which I have now forgotten) be accepted into this new alliance. Clearly this was a ploy. The addition of a half-dozen peripheral PPP-supporting parties would have immensely bolstered PPP's strength within the MRD. Those who were well versed in such tactical maneuvers, such as Nasrullah Khan, were quick to raise objections to these machinations. Both Mairaj Muhammad and Fatehyab Ali Khan had to sit outside all through the duration of the meeting while their case was argued.

During the course of the meeting Benazir Bhutto suddenly stormed in and started loudly berating her mother. 'How can you sit there', she screamed at Nusrat Bhutto, 'with these people whose hands are red with my father's blood! Visibly upset by this outburst the assembled leaders decided to postpone the meeting until that afternoon and would reassemble at my residence. As I arose to leave Nusrat Bhutto pleaded with me to stay for a brief while longer. Then in my presence she admonished Benazir and reminded her of my relationship with her late father. She also told her that I had been the only opposition leader to have openly condemned her father's execution, and also that I had sent a telegram of condolence to Nusrat Bhutto.

Later that afternoon the MRD signatories gathered at my house with Nusrat Bhutto now being assisted by Farooq Leghari and Rao Rashid Khan. In their presence the other politicians signed the agreement which had earlier been endorsed by Nusrat Bhutto and myself. Even Mairaj Muhammad Khan and Fatehyab Ali were now invited to sign the document. Nasrullah Khan wished to invite Pir Pagaro's Muslim League and the Jamaat-i-Islami to join the movement. Mahmood Ali Kasuri was also keen to see Tehrik-i-Istiqlal's partner Maulana Noorani and his JUP in the MRD as well. I then added Ghous Buksh Bizenjo's PNP to the list of invitees as well. In the end only one of them, the PNP, joined in late 1983.

Nusrat Bhutto was keen that I lead the MRD but her efforts were opposed by some other parties, in particular the Tehrik-i-Istiqlal which wished to see Asghar Khan head the movement. In the end a compromise was worked out. Within the MRD a Pakistan Bachao National Action Committee was formed. The committee had four members, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Khawaja Khairuddin and Mairaj Muhammad Khan and later I was also elected as the Chairman of MRDs '*Pakistan Bachao*' Committee. Nusrat Bhutto had proposed my name and this was unanimously approved by the others. It is the sad nature of Pakistani politics that Tehrik-i-Istiqlal would soon disassociate itself from the MRD in all but name.

The next day the martial law authorities took cognizance of the MRD by expelling both Mahmood Ali Kasuri and Sirdar Qayum Khan from Sindh.

* * *

On 2 March 1981 a PIA Boeing 737 was hijacked by Al-Zulfikar terrorists and taken to Kabul. According to the memoirs of a senior Al-Zulfikar member, Raja Anwar, who had then been residing in Kabul, 'the hijack plot was hammered out in detail' three months earlier between Murtaza Bhutto and Salamullah Tipu, the eventual leader of the hijackers.⁶⁶² The results of their plans would end in creating a double tragedy for a family well known to me. Eight days earlier, on 22 February my friend General Kazi Rahim had died. His son Tariq, had returned from his diplomatic posting at Teheran to bury his father and had the grave misfortune of taking the ill-fated PIA flight to Peshawar. On the evening of 6 March, after spending four days cooped up in the hijacked plane at Kabul airport, as Raja Anwar states, Tariq Rahim was shot by Tipu after receiving a prearranged signal from Murtaza Bhutto to carry out the execution.⁶⁶³ Tariq's body was then callously flung down onto the tarmac.

⁶⁶² Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, op. cit., p. 91. It is worth mentioning that five months before the hijacking took place Murtaza Bhutto was quoted as having stated 'PIA is our first target. I appeal to people not to use this airline': The Sunday Times, London, 7 March 1981.

⁶⁶³ Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, ibid., p. 108.

I had last seen Tariq only the day before he commenced on his ill-fated journey. The manner of his death greatly upset me. It is ironical that one day both the perpetrators, Tipu and Murtaza Bhutto, would themselves meet with violent ends. In 1984 Tipu was executed by an Afghan firing squad after having been found guilty of murdering an Al-Zulfikar colleague.⁶⁶⁴ In 1996 Murtaza Bhutto was himself shot to death on the streets of Karachi by policemen at a time when his sister was the prime minister.

Afghanistan had provided protection to Murtaza and his ragtag band of men during their exile. By chance I had already met the man who would turn out to be his key protector. In September 1979 when President Nur Muhammad Taraki was overthrown and killed by his deputy Hafizullah Amin, a number of Taraki's close associates fled Afghanistan. The new refugees included Dr Najibullah Khan who turned up unannounced at my doorstep one day in late 1979. He was carrying a letter from Arbab Sikandar Khalil, former NWFP governor and senior member of NDP (he was later murdered in Peshawar by a fanatic in 1982), asking me to help the man. Dr Najibullah was desperate to get a visa for India where he planned to seek asylum. I happened to be on extremely cordial terms with Mani Shankar Ayer, then the Indian Consul General at Karachi and the visa was arranged without difficulty.⁶⁶⁵ A few months later, in December, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan Hafizullah Amin was killed and replaced by Babrak Karmal. Dr. Najibullah soon returned to Kabul and attained the all-powerful post of intelligence chief and deputy to Karmal himself. He would now provide complete protection to Murtaza and his men. As Raja Anwar commented, 'without Najibullah's personal support, there would have been no Al-Zulfikar in the first place'.⁶⁶⁶ Later he ousted Babrak Karmal and installed himself as President in 1987. While I had only helped Najibullah get a visa, I had little sympathy for his politics. At the same time no one deserved the savage brutality of his death. In 1996 he was lynched in public and then his strung up corpse was vilely mutilated in front of a cheering mob.

Over the course of the Afghan civil war I received visitors from a variety of the fighting factions. Knowing about my concern for the sad plight of their nation, they would come to discuss the problems facing them and invariably try and enlist my support. Some of these callers, such as Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani and Engineer Gulbadeen Hikmatyar, would later gain even further prominence with time. The tragedy of Afghanistan lies before us. There were no real victors. Not only had millions of Afghans died or become refugees, but Pakistan became badly lacerated in the process.

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⁶⁶⁴ Tipu is said to have pleaded to the Afghan court that he had carried the killing on Murtaza Bhutto's instructions, as the murdered man had been a 'traitor' to Al-Zulfikar (Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, ibid., pp. 161-3).

⁶⁶⁵ Months later I would receive a personal note of gratitude Dr. Najibullah for helping him 'during a time of adversity'. The note was accompanied with a gift of a Czech machine-pistol.

⁶⁶⁶ Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, op. cit., p. 210.

Using the pretext of the PIA hijacking the regime began a crackdown on MRD. On 9 March as I was returning by road to Karachi from Sonmiani I learnt that Nusrat and Benazir Bhutto had been arrested. Moves were already afoot to impair the movement. On 19 March Altaf Qureshi of *Urdu Digest* and Salahuddin of *Jasarat* visited me at my house, and spent an hour trying to 'persuade us to leave MRD'.⁶⁶⁷ Sirdar Abdul Qayum Khan was the first to buckle under pressure. On 22 March he appeared on nationwide television confessing to having made a mistake by joining the MRD and then proceeded to criticize the movement. The next day we decided to hold an MRD meeting on 24 March during which we would officially expel Qayum Khan from the movement. That evening the police arrived at my house carrying 'externment' orders expelling me from the province of Sindh. I was taken to the railway station under escort and made to board the Khyber Mail. I recall that it was not a particularly pleasant journey, as my diary entry states, 'Bitten by bed bugs the whole night. Sat up killing them. No sleep'.⁶⁶⁸ The police escort released me at Sadiqabad station where my staff had arrived to take me to Sonmiani. In my absence a writ was filed on my behalf by my son Sherazam challenging my deportation from the province on the grounds that I had effectively been residing in Karachi since the early 1950s. Not only was my home in Karachi but I had also been successfully elected to the National Assembly from one of the city's constituencies in 1977. By mid-April the Sindh government was compelled to withdraw its orders against me.

In May I travelled to Peshawar to attend a political meeting of the party. Shortly after I returned to Karachi I received a missive from the NWFP government advising me that I was prohibited from re-entering the province until further notice. The ban was to intermittently last until 1984.

In the meantime I continued holding regular meetings with other political leaders on the MRD and its future plan of activities. Some of the revelations made during these discussions were quite startling. On 9 June Khawaja Khairuddin from the Muslim League revealed to me that he had been keeping regular contact with a Colonel Imtiaz of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).⁶⁶⁹ Khairuddin insisted that he was deliberately misleading the ISI representative who was demanding detailed information on the activities of the MRD from him. A month later Khairuddin came to visit once again to make further admissions. He now confessed that he had been in touch with the regime and had come to the conclusion that formation of a 'national government' would be in our interest. Amazed at Khairuddin's volte-face I politely told him that I was against the formation of any unrepresentative government created to 'legitimize' Zia's regime.

The other person who caused me astonishment was Nusrat Bhutto. On 26 July 1981 Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi informed me that his party leader wanted to retire from politics

⁶⁶⁷ Diary entry for 19 March 1981.

⁶⁶⁸ Diary entry for 23-24 March 1981.

⁶⁶⁹ I imagine that Colonel Imtiaz was the same person who later achieved notoriety as Brigadier 'Billa' Imtiaz.

and wished him to represent her. It seemed understandable. After the death of her husband, with the PPP leadership being thrust upon her, the task was proving to be too much for Nusrat Bhutto. But it was the manner in which she sought release from her responsibilities which gave rise to doubts. Three days after Jatoi's visit, on 30 July, Khairuddin called on me once again. This time he revealed that he had been acting as go-between for Nusrat Bhutto and the ISI. According to him Nusrat Bhutto had promised to retire from politics provided she was allowed to leave the country. Khairuddin justified his role by insisting that he had been acting in the 'national interest'. A few days later, on 10 August, Mir Afzal Khan, then a senior PPP leader, told me over lunch at my house that Nusrat Bhutto had also been holding secret meetings with General Sadiq Abassi, the Sindh Governor, with a view to striking a deal with the regime. Mir Afzal told me that Mrs. Bhutto had contacted Sadiq Abassi through Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi who was married to the Governor's sister. It appeared that Nusrat Bhutto was now pleading for a respite from the very military regime that had hanged her husband. Mir Afzal's information was later confirmed by Sadiq Abbasi, who would tell me in 1986 that not only did the Bhutto ladies reach a clandestine understanding with the regime in 1981, but that 'Benazir kept her promise and secretly cooperated with the government by not issuing overly critical statements' right until her departure for London in January 1984.⁶⁷⁰

When we next held a meeting of the MRD leadership meeting to pass a resolution condemning terrorism, with particular reference to hijacking, Nusrat Bhutto was conspicuous by her absence. A few months later, in 1982, she left for London, on grounds of ill-health. It was announced by the PPP that she was suffering from cancer.

By 1981 Zia had decided to stop scheduling phantom elections. Instead he sought to legitimize his rule by 'law'. In the absence of popular backing he promulgated the 1981 Provisional Constitution Order. It was claimed that it was required 'for consolidating and declaring the Law and for effectively meeting the threat to the integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan', and 'because doubts have arisen ... as regards the powers and jurisdiction of the superior courts'.⁶⁷¹ Instead, as one foreign legal writer commented, 'the PCO extinguished judicial powers'.⁶⁷² The prime movers behind this unprincipled and unparalleled piece of legal jiggery-pokery were none other than Messrs A. K. Brohi and Sharifuddin Pirzada.⁶⁷³ These two men were later scathingly described by General Chishti to be among Zia's most prominent 'sycophants'.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷⁰ Dairy entry: 8 January 1986.

⁶⁷¹ Preamble, Provisional Constitution Order, 1981, (CMLA's Order of 1981) (Lahore: Civil and Criminal Law Publication, 1983).

⁶⁷² Paula R. Newberg, *Judging the State*, op. cit., p. 180.

⁶⁷³ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 260.

⁶⁷⁴ Lt.-General Faiz Ali Chishti, *Betrayals, of Another Kind*, op. cit., p. 68.

The PCO effectively abrogated the 1973 Constitution and virtually placed all power in the hands of the executive, in other words, in General Zia. It also provided extensive emergency provisions to extend military rule and gave Zia the retrospective power to amend the constitution. According to the PCO all orders and actions taken by the regime were considered to be legally valid, and 'notwithstanding any judgment of any Court' could not be called into question 'in any Court on any ground whatsoever'.

Further the PCO excluded the judiciary from hearing a broad range of cases. Military personnel were now completely exempt from civil prosecution. High Courts were prevented from ruling on preventive detention or offering relief to those jailed under preventive detention. Nor could they interfere with any case registered in civil or military courts or tribunals or even police stations. The effect of the PCO on the judiciary was devastating. But to get judicial 'legitimacy' Zia insisted that all judges of the superior court had to take an oath to uphold the PCO.

It was the saddest of reflections on the individual integrity of our senior judiciary that only two of the Supreme Courts judges proved worthy of their office by resigning. Eager to stay in office, the rest of the judges betrayed their high calling by cravenly swearing an oath to uphold the new political order which rendered them irrelevant.⁶⁷⁵ The two exceptions, the worthy Justices Dorab Patel and Fakhruddin G. Ibrahim should be admired for placing their principles before personal self-interest.⁶⁷⁶ As for the rest, I openly condemned them at every opportunity. Finally in 1983 after a public meeting in Malir, where I attacked these servile Supreme Court and High Court judges rather more vehemently than usual, I was 'rewarded' with a contempt of court notice from the Sindh High Court while in detention near Khanewal. During the contempt hearing I was represented by Barrister Azizullah Sheikh, Chief Justice (retired) Khuda Buksh Marri, Imam AH Qazi and Iqbal Haider. To their credit these gentlemen took the case as a matter of principle and refused to accept any fees. Later I was asked to meet the Sindh Chief Justice Saeed Qureshi in his chambers. The judge suggested that if I made a public apology all would be forgotten. Unrepentant I declined his offer. Rather than make a further issue of it, the judges apparently then decided to let the matter rest. I heard no further from them.

* * *

During 1982 efforts continued to unite all political parties in a struggle for the restoration of democracy. At every stage we faced obstacles. Political leaders were prevented from meeting each other by means of arrests and 'externments'. Our telephones were tapped, our cars trailed and our parties remained constantly exposed to infiltration by the intelligence agencies. The economic conditions in Pakistan during

⁶⁷⁵ Among them was Justice (later Chief Justice) Nasim Hussain Shah, self-proclaimed 'savior of democracy'.

⁶⁷⁶ It has been reported that Chief Justice Anwarul Haq resigned at the last minute rather than take oath under the PCO: General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 261.

this period had been propitious for Zia. The influx of foreign funds as a result of the Afghan War and the substantially increased remittances sent by expatriate workers bode well for the economy.⁶⁷⁷ There was a mood of passivity among the general public. It was clear that if the MRD wished to succeed in its ambitions it would have to struggle that much harder. The NDP maintained a more aggressive posture towards the military regime than most other parties. In March 1983 I had already been warned by Mir Khalilur-Rehman of the *Jang* newspaper group that the regime had instructed the Press to desist from projecting NDP's role in the MRD.⁶⁷⁸

The orders of 'externment' issued to politicians was a case in point. While other political parties had resigned themselves to obeying the government's 'externment' directives, NDP leaders continued to belligerently defy the ban on their inter-provincial movements on the grounds that as the government itself had been violating constitutional laws for the past six years, it could hardly expect us to obey its illegal instructions. When the issue was raised by the NDP at an MRD meeting 'there were some sharp differences of opinion and the participants thought it wiser to drop the issue for the time being'.⁶⁷⁹ The hesitancy of the other parties had little effect on us as the NDP leaders had borne a large brunt of these 'externment' orders. I had already been banned from entering the NWFP, Punjab and Balochistan. The hostile regime would ensure that these bans would remain in force for a number of years to follow.

To my mind the MRD was at crossroads. As Mazhar Ali Khan of Viewpoint commented:

Since the MRD was set up two-and-a-half years ago, its aims have been stated in fairly clear terms. In putting forward its four-point demand, the nine-party alliance has repeatedly declared (no matter whether this was seen as a threat or promise) that if its appeals were disregarded it would be compelled to launch a movement. Resolutions on these lines were passed again and again, so often in fact that many of its sympathizers and even Government's supporters began to make fun of the MRD's incapacity to move from words to action. During this period, differences within its camp were highlighted, the lack of organization among component parties was stressed, and above all, the lack of will among its leaders to struggle was pointed out as the main reason for the MRD's failure to keep its promise of doing something for the restitution of political rights.⁶⁸⁰

There were only two alternatives before us; call it a day or pursue our original goal with full vigor towards open confrontation with the regime. Deeply upset as I was with the

⁶⁷⁷ In the period 1982-3 overseas worker remittances had reached an all high of US\$ 2.886 billion (Parvez Hasan, *Pakistan's Economy at the Crossroads*, Oxford, Karachi, 1998, p. 238).

⁶⁷⁸ Diary entry: 10 March 1983.

⁶⁷⁹ *The Leader*, Karachi, 13 March 1983.

⁶⁸⁰ *The Viewpoint*, Lahore, 8 September 1983, ('Between the Lines').

continuation of martial law, the abject sight of political parties pursuing their selfish plans was equally frustrating. There remained a hope that a higher moral purpose might galvanize them towards greater unity. On the day of my appointment as the Convenor of the MRD we began to take steps towards, what I believed, was the right direction.

The MRD committee headed by the defunct National Democratic Party (NDP) chief Sardar Sherbaz Mazari has started drawing a detailed programme for launching a non-cooperation movement from August 14, this year. The Committee has formulated a 31-point charter which was approved by MRD last week.⁶⁸¹

As chairman of the MRD's National Action Committee I had tried to enlist the support of non-MRD parties, such as Jamaati-Islami, Maulana Noorani's JUP, and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo's PNP. The religious parties had objected to the PPP's presence in the MRD and insisted on keeping their distance from the MRD. The PNP had refused to join the MRD for the ostensible reason that it was at odds with Wali Khan's hostility towards the Babrak Karmal government in Afghanistan.

When I took over as Convenor of the MRD on 12 May 1983 I faced a movement that was close to disintegration as a result of petty rivalries and outside conspiracies. The movement had more than its fair share of internal dissension and Asghar Khan's Tehrik-i-Istiqlal (TIP) was often the cause. At times TIP would not send a representative, at other times MRD decisions would be delayed by them, and on occasion the alliance would be subjected by them to public criticism.⁶⁸² Even the MRD's 31-point programme which had been accepted by all other component parties met with rejection by the TIP, which called it an 'NDP-plan'. In an effort to induce TIP back into the MRD mainstream, the NDP even publicly suggested that Asghar Khan's party be given the MRD presidency on a permanent basis.⁶⁸³

Later even the JUI, a component party, was to backtrack from its firm commitment to the MRD. Overlooking its earlier agreement to the 31-point programme, Maulana Fazlur Rehman informed me that his party now wanted a 'permanent organizational structure' and 'an Islamic slogan' for the movement. Though he favoured the removal of martial law, he believed that an interim government should be accepted by all.⁶⁸⁴

The MRD was wracked with other problems as well. Some of its leaders had been discovered to be quietly consorting with senior Zia associates - such as Khawaja Khairuddin who met with General Rao Farman Ali. These meetings helped damage the

⁶⁸¹ *The Leader*, Karachi, 18 May 1983.

⁶⁸² *Daily News*, Karachi, 24 November 1982 ('Asghar Not Happy with MRD').

⁶⁸³ *The Star*, Karachi, 28 April 1983.

⁶⁸⁴ Diary entry: 2 June 1983.

movement's credibility in the eyes of the people. Then there were the conflicting views regularly aired in public, such as when the then secretary general of the PPP, Farooq Leghari, obtusely disregarding Nusrat Bhutto's written commitment made to me, claimed that his party had not agreed to annulments of amendments to the 1973 Constitution.⁶⁸⁵ Some days later, I learnt from Mir Afzal Khan that Aftab Sherpao and Farooq Leghari were opposed to NDP and were trying their best to influence the Bhutto ladies against us.⁶⁸⁶ A little while later Khawaja Khairuddin surprised me with yet another revelation. He informed me that General Rao Farman Ali was adamant that Benazir Bhutto will 'remain silent' during the course of future anti-government activities because of an agreement secretly entered into by the Bhutto ladies with the martial law authorities.⁶⁸⁷

Equally serious for the MRD were the divisive actions of those that were acting in conjunction with the intelligence agencies and the government. As a newspaper would report some months later: 'some of the leaders who are sincerely interested in the restoration of democracy feel that some elements at the behest of the vested interest are trying to destroy the alliance'.⁶⁸⁸ In absence of conclusive proof there was little we could do to deal with these stool pigeons.

Despite our strenuous efforts other component parties continued to follow their independent agendas. In complete contravention of the original 4-points which led to the formation of the MRD, JUI and TIP had now agreed to participate in the latest round of local bodies elections announced by General Zia. In the meantime in a bid to raise the political tempo I once more defied the 'externment' orders by visiting Punjab and Balochistan. On the first day of July we addressed a public meeting in the Sher Shah area of Karachi in defiance of the section 144 restrictions on public gatherings. The official response was soon in coming. On 3 July I was officially 'externed' from Sindh. It created a ludicrous situation that can only be dreamed up by Pakistani bureaucrats. I had now become 'externed' from all the four provinces that made up Pakistan. I was placed by the police on a plane bound for Lahore. My arrival at Lahore led to bureaucratic pandemonium as the Punjab martial law authorities refused to let me disembark and instead issued an air ticket for my return to Karachi. After much confabulation the absurdity of the situation dawned upon them. I was then driven under police escort to Begum Kishwar Abid Hussain's house which was then promptly declared as a 'subjail'. The next morning I was flown to Multan escorted by a strangely frightened police inspector who kept pretending that he was suffering from a heart seizure. From Multan the police took me to Rojhan, with a brief stop in Rajanpur where the senior police official informed me that I was forbidden under 'the severe sanction of martial law' to leave Rojhan.

⁶⁸⁵ *The Leader*. Karachi, 18 April 1983.

⁶⁸⁶ Diary entry: 28 April 1983.

⁶⁸⁷ Diary entry: 3 May 1983.

⁶⁸⁸ *Daily News*, Karachi, 8 May 1983.

After a week of enforced rest at Rojhan where I celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr I soon defied Punjab martial law orders by travelling outside Rojhan to Rahimyar Khan to offer condolences to the son of a former MNA and NDP leader Abdul Nabi Kanjoo who had recently died. Then I decided to violate the Sindh 'externment' by travelling to Karachi, a distance of some 400 miles, by road. Upon arriving in Karachi I immediately got together with my MRD colleagues. I was disturbed to hear Itaramul Haq Thanvi of the PPP tell me that his party was about to 'sell out' the MRD by announcing its participation in the local bodies elections. This disappointing news was confirmed the following day by Mumtaz Bhutto who telephoned to tell me that the PPP's official announcement would soon be made by Farooq Leghari. I immediately requested some of my colleagues to get in touch with PPP officials and advise them to urgently reconsider their decision. Meanwhile the PPP's acting-leader, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, continued to stay out of Pakistan. In view of the MRD's planned campaign of action, his absence appeared highly unusual. It was unlikely that the PPP's contribution to the MRD's campaign for civil disobedience could be orchestrated from London.

The next day, 18 July, while I was out, a large contingent of police blockaded the road and surrounded my house. Soon after I was re-arrested and flown under escort to Multan, then driven straight to Multan Jail and put into solitary confinement in a 'C' class cell.⁶⁸⁹ While it was obvious that the regime wanted to detach me from the MRD and our planned programme of protest, I remained perturbed about its future. I noted in my diary 'I hope those who have replaced me since my arrest do the right thing'.⁶⁹⁰ A fortnight later I was shifted to a remote government rest house in the Pirowal forest near Khanewal, where I was to spend the next two and a half months with a constant guard of thirty-three policemen. In mid-October after suffering a heart attack, on the advice of doctors, I was shifted to Karachi and placed under house arrest at my residence. In Karachi I was looked after by Dr Shaukat Ali Syed. It was to take another two and a half months before I was finally released from confinement and set at liberty.

* * *

While in jail I kept abreast with events that were taking place by faithfully listening to BBC's Urdu service. On 3 August I was pleased to learn that the NDP executive committee had taken a very strong line at Machiavellian maneuverings of the PPP by recommending that any party wishing to contest the local bodies elections be thrown out of the MRD. By 10 August the PPP 'relented and announced its decision to boycott the local body polls on pretext that their candidates' nominations were being rejected by the authorities. Noticeably, no mention was made of the pressure that had been exerted by its partners in the MRD.

⁶⁸⁹ All contact with other prisoners was forbidden, including joining the congregation for Friday prayers.

⁶⁹⁰ Diary entry: 24 July 1983.

The following day the actions of some of my colleagues sent me into deep depression. BBC announced that NDP's Ghulam Ahmed Bilour had resigned as acting Convenor of the MRD, a position he had held since my arrest. The general secretary NDP member Abdul Khaliq Khan had resigned from the MRD. They had acted upon instructions given by Abdul Ghaffar Khan. I felt that 'all my 8 years of hard work had suddenly gone down the drain'.⁶⁹¹ That day my eldest son Sherazam rang Bilour and remonstrated with him about his actions. His words were: 'How could you betray my father while he is in jail? Is this how you repay him after all his efforts to get you and other NAP leaders out of Hyderabad jail'. According to Sherazam, Bilour replied in a voice choked with regret and emotion, that he was bound to the Wali Khan family and was helpless before them.

It was only much later that I learnt from my friend Fazle Haq, then Governor of NWFP, as to what had actually taken place behind the scene. To preempt MRD's planned campaign of protest in the NWFP, Fazle Haq had obtained the services of a local politician named Ibrahim Khan of Tull to pass a message onto Ghaffar Khan. I had earlier, in 1997, got a PNA ticket for the same Ibrahim Khan who then was successfully elected from the Mardan area. In his message Fazli shrewdly conveyed the impression that the success of the MRD campaign would only help the PPP regain power. 'Just remember what Bhutto did to you and your family', Fazle Haq warned Ghaffar Khan 'It will all happen once again!' With this warning ringing in the elderly Pathan leader's ears, Ghaffar Khan summoned Bilour and Khaliq Khan, and directed that the NDP adopt his Bannu Resolution demanding an autonomous Pakhtunistan. Unable to contact Wali Khan who was then in England, Bilour and other senior NWFP NDP members hastily summoned a press conference and in Ghaffar Khan's presence publicly announced their resignations from both the NDP and the MRD. It was a recipe designed for chaos.

From the sidelines the *Viewpoint* commented:

As a key figure in the defunct NDP, it was [Bilour's] duty not only to abide by his party's mandate but also to ensure allegiance to it by all other members. He would have been perfectly right in quitting the party if he found himself in disagreement with its course of action. There is no justification whatsoever for acting contrary to one's own belief at the bidding of an elder, however eminent or respectable the latter may be. The incident only reflects on a lack of maturity in the country's political councils and a persisting tendency to compromise principles for personal considerations rooted in feudal habits.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ Diary entry: 13 August 1983.

⁶⁹² *The Viewpoint*, Lahore, 18 August 1983, ('Between the Lines'), p. 7.

A few days later Begum Wali Khan returned from London and attempted to correct the confusion by announcing at a press conference that the NWFP NDP had 'no differences' with the MRD. The following day, on 17 August, she was arrested as well. Subsequently the NDP held a protest rally at Peshawar which attracted a few hundred people. This led to the arrest of Bilour, Khaliq Khan and dozens of senior NDP members, and the protest movement in the NWFP effectively came to an end. As far as I was concerned considerable damage had been done to the MRD, and the belated attempt to rally support for the MRD was a question of too little and too late. It had largely been a face saving exercise. I was deeply disappointed by my colleagues. A depression sank in and my health suffered. On 2 September I started suffering extreme pains in my chest which was later diagnosed by doctors from Nishtar Hospital Multan to have been an angina attack.

The MRD protest only took spark in rural Sindh. With all the senior leaders of the MRD in detention, the movement leadership fell into the hands of low-level workers who lacked the ability to lead. The protest then took a sudden and violent turn. Depressed by the turn of events I noted in my diary: 'It seems now [that] the Movement for Restoration of Democracy has taken an ugly turn. It is more of a Sindhi nationalist movement and can become dangerous...makes me worried and sad'.⁶⁹³ The violence was to carry on for a number of months. Troops were eventually called in to forcefully pacify the province. A foreign periodical covering the events at the time stated:

The MRD demonstrations have often been violent, and some of the Sindh casualties have been the police, who were fired at by demonstrators. The violence has also become communal in places, with pro-PPP native Sindhis attacking Punjabi settlers who the Sindhis accuse of backing the armed forces. Despite the PPP's claims of a mass following in Punjab, the anti-Punjab nature of the campaign in Sindh has kept the province from participating in the movement. Karachi, the capital of Sindh and Pakistan's largest city, also has been little affected ... This is attributable in part, to the predominantly non-Sindhi population in the city, which is apprehensive about Sindhi domination.⁶⁹⁴

In return the regime retaliated harshly. A local journalist, Maleeha Lodhi, writing in a foreign journal commented:

The teeth for eating were bared in rural Sindh... Security forces launched an operation against 'dacoits and criminals' with a ferocity reminiscent of the army's action in the former East Pakistan in 1971 ... After reports of official brutality leaked out, the government felt forced to deny that homes had been bulldozed, crops burned or helicopter gunships used in 'security operation'... independent

⁶⁹³ Diary entry: 22 August 1983.

⁶⁹⁴ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, ('Pakistan: A Question of Stability') 29 September 1983, p. 54.

sources put the number killed since the protest campaign began in August at 250. More than 6,000 people have been arrested'.⁶⁹⁵

Later there were some harsh post-mortems done on the MRD protest campaign. In 1983 a Sindhi politician, using the pseudonym of 'A Patriot', wrote and circulated a letter which was in reality an excerpt of an earlier newsletter published by a so-called 'Sindhi Employees Association of Larkana'. Both these documents bitterly attacked Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi.⁶⁹⁶ It accused him of having met General K. M. Arif, Zia's Chief of Staff, at a private house in Hertfordshire, England. According to the newsletter at the meeting

... it was agreed that the movement was to be a token one to last about fifteen days just to build Jatoi's image as a national and real leader of the PPP so that he carried the Party with himself when after a dialogue, and minor concessions, he joined the military government...

The arrangements for the civil disobedience movement were that Jatoi was to court arrest at Jinnah's Mazar [at Karachi] on 14th August 1983, and a letter was issued to all [PPP's former] MNAs and Senators to do the same in their areas. That was all. No effort was made to prepare and involve the people of Sindh much less in any other provinces. Thus according to the plan, Jatoi courted arrest at the Mazar on the 14th of August 1983, but was not arrested. The Government allowed the media to give the incident maximum coverage although strict censorship is enforced regarding news of Miss Benazir Bhutto and Begum Bhutto. He turned up at Regal Chowk the next day, and was taken away in the DIG police's car and placed under house arrest in his Defence Society residence ... The PPP flag and a black protest flag was allowed to remain on the top of his ... house although it had been transferred into a sub-jail...⁶⁹⁷

'The Patriot' explained away Jatoi's subsequent encouragement of the movement in Sindh by adding that

Once the London scheme broke down [because of the uncontrollable violence in Sindh], everyone was on his own. Jatoi changed his tactics and tried to sponsor the movement as it was. He mobilized his sons, brothers and hirelings, spending large sums of money to appear to lead, while Zia sensing extreme danger, turned his army loose on the people.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁵ *South*, December 1983, London, ('A Nation at Risk') p. 22.

⁶⁹⁶ It was commonly believed at that time that the writer of both the letters was Mumtaz Bhutto.

⁶⁹⁷ Newsletter of the Sindhi Employees Association. Larkana, titled 'The Truth about the Situation in Sindh' dated November 1983, pp. 1-3 (in my possession).

⁶⁹⁸ 'The Truth about the situation in Sindh' by 'A Patriot'. A photocopy this publicly circulated letter came into my possession in March 1984. In most part the wording of this shorter letter and the newsletter of the Sindhi Employees Association. Larkana is identical.

As the suspected writer of these letters was an avid political rival of Jatoi's it is not possible to ascertain the truth of these accusations. There was undoubtedly a close link between the bureaucratic/military establishment and Jatoi which lasted well after Zia's death.⁶⁹⁹ But whether this link was secretly enhanced during the MRD protests only future historians can decide.

Another MRD member to be later publicly excoriated for his part in the MRD movement was Khawaja Khairuddin. One of his deputies, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, a senior vice-president of the Muslim League in 1983, accused both Khawaja Khairuddin and Malik Qasim of being responsible for the failure of the MRD movement. He alleged that these two MRD leaders had 'spied' for the government. According to him 'any decision of the MRD [was] leaked to the [GHQ] by the alliance's Secretary General [Khairuddin], enabling the regime to forestall any action that the MRD might take'.⁷⁰⁰ Bashir Ahmed also accused Khairuddin of trying to 'blacken' the MRD's reputation by asking the US Consul General to provide funds for the MRD movement.

While it would seem unfair to damage Khawaja Khairuddin's reputation on the basis of accusations made by a disgruntled Muslim Leaguer, unfortunately there was subsequent corroboration of his rather invidious role in the whole affair. Without naming him General Arif states in his memoirs:

The MRD leadership could not ensure the security of information of their own action plans. The government usually remained one step ahead of their agitational activities. One of the top political leaders in their fold actively cooperated with a national intelligence agency. The MRD was thus paralyzed from within.⁷⁰¹

What finally exposed Khawaja Khairuddin was his acceptance of a valuable 5035 square yard commercial plot opposite the Sabzi Mandi at Karachi. The land had previously been designated as a park. The property was quickly re-designated as 'commercial' by the provincial government of Sindh before it was delivered to its recipient.⁷⁰²

⁶⁹⁹ It is widely believed that Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi was President Ghul Ishaq and General Mirza Aslam Baig's chosen candidate for prime minister at the time of the 1988 elections. Unfortunately their plans came adrift when Jatoi lost the election from his home seat. By the time he got re-elected from his friend Khar's vacant Muzaffargarh seat it was all too late.

⁷⁰⁰ *Daily News*, Karachi, 12 May 1986.

⁷⁰¹ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 220.

⁷⁰² I have an undated clipping of the Public Notice published in Dawn in the name of the Commissioner of Karachi proposing 'the conversion of amenity plot ST-10 measuring 5034.65 Sq.yds. (For Park) ... for allotment to Khawaja Khairuddin for commercial purpose ... interested parties may file their objections within thirty days', etc. The only date stated in the advertisement is simply the month and the year: April 1984.

As someone who had a leading role in the creation of the MRD, as well as being the Chairman of the Pakistan Bachao Committee, I was greatly disappointed with the results of our 1983 campaign. But with hindsight I believe that the MRD, despite its many weaknesses, did serve its purpose by continuing the struggle for democracy during the longest period of martial law the country had ever experienced. I. A. Rahman, one of Pakistan's senior journalists once decided to list the MRD's achievements. According to him they were:

1. It frustrated the regime's efforts to isolate the PPP and liquidate it politically.
2. It deprived the Martial Law regime of any political support that could satisfy the ruler's need for legitimacy.
3. In 1983 the MRD agitation exposed the soft belly of the State and forced the Martial Law government to compete with the political opposition on the basis of an elected parliamentary system. The August 1983 plan of phased withdrawal of Martial Law was the direct result of the MRD pressure.
4. The alliance took a correct stand on the Referendum of December 1984 and elections of 1985. A decision to participate in these affairs would have nullified all the political gains the democratic forces had achieved.
5. Above all, the MRD has symbolized the democratic aspirations of the people and their rejection of any surrender of or encroachment upon their sovereign rights. In a country where democracy has never had a chance to grow, this is an achievement of the highest order.⁷⁰³

The MRD was initially conceived on a firm basis of idealism only. When one is confronted with despotism reality might teach one to be overly cautious. But if one desires for a change in that reality, then one's beliefs and how strongly one holds onto them are all that matter. At the time we conceived the MRD I personally did not know what the MRD would achieve. All that concerned me was that Zia's omnipotency had to be challenged and MRD was the only possible means of achieving it. Even with the benefit of hindsight I still remain convinced that in the absence of the MRD Zia would have been let off the hook completely.

⁷⁰³ I. A. Rahman. *Pakistan Under Siege*, Rhotas Books, Lahore, 1990, p. 261.

CHAPTER 11

Final Years in Politics

After five years of total power the aura of legitimacy still continued to evade Zia, much to his chagrin. As his deputy, General Arif, would later confess:

Power [had] addicted Zia. There was a pinch - the more he wielded authority, the more it created the feeling of guilt in him that he was not an elected president. He wanted the stamp of legitimacy on his rule, without facing the risk of an election.⁷⁰⁴

To overcome this stigma Zia took recourse in devising new political structures to bolster his position. The PCO of 1981 had provided for a *Majlis-i-Shoora* of 350 members to be nominated by him, It was a toothless body. As Professor Lawrence Ziring pointed out:

[T]he *Majlis-i-Shoora* was not a true legislature, nor a permanent fixture. Although given the powers to scrutinize the work of an administration, it could neither initiate laws nor demand that its recommendations be adopted. Law making therefore remained a monopoly of the junta government, and martial law rules and regulations were unaffected by the creation of this 'representative' institution.⁷⁰⁵

By the time the *Shoora* held its first meeting in February 1982 it was clear that it had failed its purposes. Despite Zia's efforts to entice politicians with financial and other rewards 'the *Shoora* failed to attract even a single front-ranking politician and thus belied Zia's hopes of enlarging his political base'.⁷⁰⁶

On 12 August 1983 Zia tried to counter the MRD's 14th August protest movement by announcing a new political blueprint for the country. His new plan called for the holding of local, provincial and national elections over an eighteen-month period. The national and provincial elections were to be held by 23 March 1985. The scheme also envisaged a President with greatly enhanced constitutional powers and a National Security Council made up of senior armed forces personnel and other officials.

A number of crucial points had been glossed over. No mention had been made about lifting the ban on the 'defunct' political parties. The critical question of whether the

⁷⁰⁴ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 226.

⁷⁰⁵ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford Karachi, 1997, p. 463.

⁷⁰⁶ R. G. Sawhney, *Zia's Pakistan*, ABC Publishing, New Delhi, 1985, p. 12.

elections would be held under the normal party-based system or on a 'party-less' basis had also been left unanswered. Also the issue of whether parties were to be allowed, then would all be allowed or only those that been 'registered' with the regime was unresolved. The rules on qualifying standards of the eligibility of candidates were not spelt out either. Finally, there was much concern over the proposed 'National Security Council'. Its composition seemed to have had been deliberately left vague. Most political parties, particularly those in the MRD which was about to commence its civil disobedience movement, correctly viewing Zia's latest move as a ploy to pre-empt the coming agitation, expressed their hostility towards it.

'Zia was a clever tactician who kept his final decisions hidden even from his own advisers.⁷⁰⁷ While he overtly responded to opposition moves by constitutional changes, he would also use covert means to keep them at bay. As the existence of the MRD had denied him the chance to isolate the PPP and liquidate it politically, he pursued an alternate option. His bete noire was the Bhutto family and for his future well-being, he considered it essential to disconnect them from the PPP. His efforts had succeeded by mid-1981, when as mentioned earlier, Nusrat Bhutto struck a deal with the regime to leave quietly for abroad. The PPP's questionable commitment to the MRD agitation in 1983 was, in hindsight, due to the fact that Benazir Bhutto, then under house arrest, kept firmly to her secret commitment and purposely ducked from opening up a new front against the regime. The publicity given by the government-controlled media to Jatoi, after his late return from London and his subsequent moves to court arrest, had laid open the regime's attempt to manipulate changes in the PPP leadership. The final act of this secret deal, as confirmed by General Sadiq Abassi, was Benazir Bhutto's unexpectedly sudden departure for London only a few months later in January 1984.

* * *

In early April 1984, shortly after I was released from house arrest, I presided over the NDP's National Executive Committee meeting held at Wali Bagh in Charsadda, NWFP. During the course of the meeting I submitted my resignation as party president on the grounds that the NDP had failed to honor its commitment to the MRD during the 1983 protest campaign. I believed someone had to answer to the members for the lapses committed by the party's senior leadership. And as the party's leader I insisted on shouldering the blame for the betrayal of our cause. However, I was prevailed upon to temporarily withdraw my resignation for the sake of party unity. But my mind was made up. After Bilour and Khaliq Khan's last minute desertions at Ghaffar Khan's instructions, I no longer felt I could lead the NDP. A few months later on 16 November 1984, at the time of party elections I stepped down from my office and then officially proposed Wali Khan for the office of party president. And so, eight years after founding the party, I happily quit its leadership.

⁷⁰⁷ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 226.

Having committed himself to holding party-less elections in March 1985, Zia was aware that the formation of a new 'National Assembly' would ultimately lead to a withdrawal of martial law. To protect himself from future uncertainty on 1 December 1984, Zia announced plans to hold a referendum. The aim of the referendum was to get himself 'elected' as President for a further five year period after the martial law was lifted.

The ludicrous question put to voters on the referendum was:

Do you endorse the process initiated by the President of Pakistan, General Muhammad Ziaul Haq, for bringing the laws of Pakistan in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Koran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and for the preservation of the ideology of Pakistan; and are you in favor of the continuation and further consolidation of that process and for the smooth and orderly transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people?⁷⁰⁸

Undoubtedly drafted by either Sharifuddin Pirzada or Brohi, the question put the voters in a total quandary. If they voted 'no' they could be accused of being against Islam, the Koran, the Prophet and the ideology of Pakistan. If they voted 'Yes', then as Zia had announced, it would be taken to mean an endorsement of the martial law regime and its policies, and five more years of Zia as President. If the absurd referendum had not been reinforced in the background by the might of the armed forces, it may have justifiably been derided out of existence.

Having set the date of the referendum for 19 December, Zia then began behaving like an election candidate at the hustings. He went on a whirlwind 'campaign' tour of all the four provinces with the local administrations ensuring that there was a heavy turnout at the meetings. He even cancelled the existing election Rule requiring voters to - produce national identity cards prior to casting their vote. And, to ensure that that there was no public move against the referendum, a number of hostile politicians were detained. I was among them.

As expected the government machinery went into action and announced a 97.71 percent 'Yes' vote and a voter turn-out of 62.2 percent.⁷⁰⁹ The truth was altogether different. Reports reaching me assessed the turn-out to have been no more than 16 percent.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸ President's Order No. 11 of 1984, the Referendum Order, 1984. *Gazette of Pakistan Extraordinary*. Part I, of 1 December 1984.

⁷⁰⁹ *Pakistan Year Book 1987-88*, East and West Publishing Company, Karachi, p. 235.

⁷¹⁰ According to another source on the Referendum turn-out: 'independent estimates were around 10 to 20 percent, because the response of the electorate was visibly lukewarm'. (Safdar Mahmood, *Pakistan Political Roots and Development*, Vanguard. Lahore. 1990, p. 242.)

Roedad Khan, who was then the Secretary of the Interior, himself witnessed:

The turnout for the Referendum was embarrassingly low. Accompanied by the Director, Intelligence Bureau, I visited a number of polling stations in and around Rawalpindi. They were all deserted. At one polling station for ladies in Lalazar, I complimented the Polling Officer and her staff on the quick and efficient disposal of voters in record time as I saw no voters waiting to cast their ballot papers. On hearing this, they all said with one voice that they had not seen a single voter since early morning and had been sitting idle.⁷¹¹

Surprisingly Zia seemed to have taken the result seriously. It is said that the Referendum provided Zia with such a boost in confidence that he began distancing himself from his military colleagues. General Arif would comment:

The President felt greatly assured after his success in the referendum. A discernible change appeared in his attitude and style of work. He gradually sidelined the [Martial Law Administrators'] meetings. Their frequency decreased and issues of substance somehow lost their importance and urgency. The [March 1985] elections were due soon but they no longer appeared a priority matter. The governors, keen to discuss election matters with the President, received a lukewarm response from him. On one occasion, Generals Jilani and Fazle Haq, the Governors of Punjab and the NWFP, virtually forced a meeting on General Zia. [Even then, the meeting] remained inconclusive.⁷¹²

Like all dictators before him Zia appeared to have become cocooned from reality. He had started believing the inventions spread by his own sycophants and now considered himself to be an elected political leader. In the end probably the only person conned by the referendum was Zia himself.

The general feeling among political circles was that the abysmally low voter turn-out had damaged Zia's authority. On 12 January Zia announced that national elections would be held on 25 March, followed by elections to the provincial assemblies on 28 March. All those who had held office in the banned political parties were debarred from contesting. Four days later Zia withdrew these restrictions. The following day Mushahid Hussain, then the editor of *The Muslim* newspaper of Islamabad, called on me. Hussain was convinced that Zia's position had weakened considerably as a result of the referendum. According to him there were already signs of discontent within the army and the bureaucracy.⁷¹³

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⁷¹¹ Roedad Khan, *Pakistan - A Dream Gone Sour*, Oxford University Press Karachi, 1997, p. 90.

⁷¹² General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 229.

⁷¹³ Dairy entry: 17 January 1985.

The announcement of party-less elections posed a serious dilemma for some of the members of the MRD. To abstain risked exclusion from a government that might stay in power for years and to participate would have given legitimacy to the regime and the arbitrary constitutional structure forced upon us by the PCO. To my mind the issue was clear. One of the critical demands made by the MRD from its very onset had been that fresh and free elections be held under the 1973 Constitution. Consequently, any association with these elections would have nullified the *raison d'être* of the MRD. Yet, it had already become obvious to us that the public was keenly awaiting elections. Ten months earlier Rao Rashid of the PPP had written to us from Lahore saying:

We agree with your hunch that the Junta is determined to go ahead with their 12 August formula, but unfortunately Punjab is not just sleeping, it is preparing to participate in the election with all fervor. Our assessment is that we would find it very difficult to impose or arrange a boycott. However all thinking people feel that elections of the type Zia is contemplating would be disastrous. Therefore we must do our best to foil them.⁷¹⁴

Sensing the mood of the general public some of the MRD politicians seemed to waver from their earlier commitments. Taking advantage of the situation the regime gave the MRD leaders permission to hold a meeting at Abbottabad on 18 January 1985, thereby enabling them to decide on the MRD's stance on party-less elections. Two days before the meeting the orders were suddenly issued prohibiting a number of politicians from entering the NWFP province. Among those banned were Jatoi, Khairuddin and myself. The following day Bizenjo came to see me on his way to the airport bound for Abbottabad. He surprised me with the news that the orders regarding the others had been rescinded and, according to him, Jatoi and Khairuddin had already left for Abbottabad. Early next morning I received a visit from the police who served me with yet another notice banning me from proceeding to the NWFP. It seemed that I was the only MRD politician being officially prevented from attending the MRD meeting. Obviously something was afoot.

Despite Jatoi's denial at the time, Zia revealed in a later interview that Jatoi and two MRD leaders had been in contact with him. In fact, they had met with him secretly on 19 January and pleaded with him to give the MRD meeting a two day extension so that the three could get enough time to convince the rest of the MRD leadership not to oppose the party-less elections.⁷¹⁵ According to Zia, he then telephoned the Governor of NWFP and requested him to hold off any proposed action for a further two day period.

⁷¹⁴ Letter from Rao Rashid Khan to the secretary general of the MRD, 2 July 1984'.

⁷¹⁵ *Jang*, Karachi, 9 March 1985. One of the other leaders was suspected be Khawaja Khairuddin. The identity of the third leader remained unknown.

Stranded in Karachi I immediately issued a statement to the Press forcefully reiterating the MRD's commitment to its fundamental 4-points and stating that any compromise on the forthcoming elections was totally out of the question.⁷¹⁶ It appeared that I was not the only one perturbed by the strange sequence of events. The Bhutto ladies also issued a strongly worded statement from London which highlighted the 4-points and warned any PPP member who either participated in the elections or offered support to any candidate of instant dismissal. Whatever had been planned now came adrift. That evening the gathering of MRD leaders forcefully announced from Abbottabad that the MRD would be boycotting the 'so-called' elections.

In the early morning of 18 February, eight days before the scheduled elections, a number of us were back under house arrest. After the police had surrounded my house the Deputy Superintendent of Jails arrived to announce that my house had been officially declared a 'sub-jail'. Soon thereafter both my telephone lines were disconnected. As the election date neared, more policemen were sent as an extra-precautionary measure in case I managed to slip out and attend an MRD protest rally.

While in detention I learnt the sad news that one of my cousins, Saif-ur-Rehman Khan, had died. The following day I heard that Saif-ur-Rehman Khan's brother Anwar-ur-Rehman Khan had died of shock upon learning of his brother's death. The double tragedy as deeply upsetting. Unable to travel to Rojhan, I mourned them in private. It was only after I was released on 28 March that I got the chance to offer condolences to their immediate families at Rojhan.

* * *

In the absence of political party 'tickets', there was a large scramble of candidates for election seats. A subsequent chronicler would note:

A large number of candidates were political non-entities who wanted to try out their luck in a party-less election. About one quarter belonged to the *nouveau riche* category who [had] made a fortune during the last five to ten years. These included [people] engaged in manpower export to the Gulf states, transporters, contractors and middle-ranking traders.⁷¹⁷

Most of the rural families, involved as they were in ritual district power rivalries, had nominated their candidates. While the Jamaat-i-Islami encouraged their party men to stand in their individual capacities, Pir Pagaro and his branch of Muslim Leaguers openly supported candidates of their choosing in Sindh. All parties within the MRD,

⁷¹⁶ One of MRD's 4-points being that elections could only be held under original and untampered version of the 1973 Constitution.

⁷¹⁷ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military & Politics in Pakistan 1947-86*, op., cit., p. 247.

along with JUP, boycotted the elections. But a number of self-interested party members broke away from political allegiances to pursue their personal ambitions.

The election campaign was heavily regulated by the regime. The candidates were not allowed to use loudspeakers, hold public meetings or take out public processions. In the absence of party manifestos or political platforms, the candidates focused instead on local issues and *biradari* rivalries. As a historian later commented, 'Parochial and ethnic considerations, local alliances and local feuds figured prominently in the election campaigning'.⁷¹⁸

While Pakistan has had the misfortune of regularly producing a poor lot of politicians, the batch of new 1985 draftees were probably the worst on record. Most of them had little experience of political concepts, ideologies or dedicated beliefs. In the absence of party loyalties a large number of these new entrants were under no obligation to any democratic ideals but instead owed their positions, and consequently their loyalties, to the martial law regime. It was to prove a disastrous portent for the future.

* * *

The elections were to provide mixed results for the regime, and as Ziring commented:

The Zia government was distressed that less than the anticipated electors cast their ballots ... The opposition took heart from the fact that Zia's slate of candidates failed to achieve a ringing endorsement, and that only two of [Zia's] nine cabinet-level officials were successful. Moreover, voters drove from office some thirty members of the National Assembly who were closely identified with the administration.⁷¹⁹

While the MRD considered these 1985 party-less elections null and void, they did however provide Zia with some form of dubious legitimacy. There were other benefits for him as well. As a historian subsequently pointed out:

Not only did they provide a new forum for his perpetual state restructuring exercises, but they also gave him an opportunity to split his political opposition between parliamentary and extra-parliament arenas, creating political divisions and overlapping political-military alliances that outlasted his rule. Together they made prospects for untrammelled civil rule seem remote.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 247-8.

⁷¹⁹ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, op. cit., p. 478.

⁷²⁰ Paula R. Newberg, *Judging the State*, op. cit., pp. 189-90.

Zia now faced the task of selecting a prime minister to head a newly formed government. He required someone malleable. Also realizing that he had to somehow pacify the hostility that had recently been unleashed in Sindh, Zia determined that the candidate would have to be a Sindhi. Two names were then selected: Ellahi Buksh Soomro, the son of Zia's supporter Moula Buksh Soomro, and Muhammad Khan Junejo, a follower of Pir Pagaro. At a Martial Law Administrators' conference it was suggested that Zia propose both the names to the new members of the National Assembly, giving them the option of selection. Both at the Martial Law Administrators Conference and a subsequent meeting, Zia's inner council made clear their preference for Soomro over Junejo.⁷²¹ It appears Zia then endorsed their suggestion but later changed his mind. According to General Arif:

The President then met the Pir of Pagaro and disclosed the names to him. The Pir of Pagaro pleaded that the President should propose only one name, and being a well-wisher of the Pakistan Muslim League, he should propose the name of Mr. Muhammad Khan Junejo. President Ziaul Haq, disregarding the advice of his colleagues, agreed with the Pir of Pagaro. He [had] played a gimmick with his staff.⁷²²

In the interval between the elections and the time the National Assembly was convened Zia 'revived' the Constitution by issuing a Presidential Order which altered the constitutional structure yet again. His legal team had now formulated provisions that significantly transformed the 1973 Constitution. The changes considerably enhanced the powers of the President at the expense of the Prime Minister. Zia's approach can be judged from the incident recounted by Roedad Khan, then the Secretary of the Interior:

In answer to my question as to who would be the Chief Executive under the amended Constitution, [Sharifuddin] Pirzada said it would be the Prime Minister. I pointed out that, if that was the position, it should be clearly understood that the Secretaries to the government should submit their cases to the Prime Minister and not to the President. The President remarked that the Chief Executive would be the Prime Minister but he would be the Super Chief Executive.⁷²³

Soon after the National Assembly met, it timidly agreed to give Zia all the powers he wished to retain for himself and passed an indemnity bill (better known now as the 8th Amendment), retrospectively legitimizing all steps taken by Zia and his regime from 1977 onwards. It was an indemnity of unprecedented scope in Pakistan's history which changed the essential character of the Constitution. S. M. Zafar, formerly Ayub Khan's

⁷²¹ Zia's inner council consisted of Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Sahibzada Yakub Khan, General Rahimuddin, General Arif and General Malik Abdul Waheed. (General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 234).

⁷²² General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, ibid., p. 234.

⁷²³ Roedad Khan, *Pakistan - A Dream Gone Sour*, op. cit., p. 91.

Law Minister, accurately predicted that the change would move the government 'from a blackout to a brown-out, converting military rule to civilian martial law'.⁷²⁴

The drafters of the 8th Amendment had also displayed legal insolence of the highest order by enshrining Zia's name indelibly into the Constitution of Pakistan.⁷²⁵ It was probably the only instance in the two, hundred year old international constitutional history where an individual was specifically referred to by name in a constitution. Unfortunately there was little protest from newly elected members of the National Assembly against this constitutional transgression.

After having forced the country to undergo party-less elections, Zia did a complete somersault by allowing Junejo to form a political party within parliament. Like Ayub Khan's government, the regime was keen to use the name of the Muslim League with the hope of borrowing the aura that went with its name right from Mr. Jinnah's days. Mazhar Ali Khan later commented:

What the Muslim League has done (and undone) during the last forty years makes one think back to the Quaid's prescience when he decided soon after the birth of Pakistan that the Muslim League should be wound up and a National League formed to become the country's initial ruling party. This shows again that wherever the Quaid's wishes have been disregarded, the country has had to pay a heavy price.⁷²⁶

After Mr. Jinnah's death no one, not even Liaquat Ali Khan, could rightly claim that his version of the Muslim League bore any resemblance to the original. Mazhar Ali Khan again quite correctly pointed out:

[The Muslim League's] spirit expired long decades ago when it became the handmaiden of the government, any government. The rot started with the strange principle that the Prime Minister of Pakistan should always also be the President of the Muslim League. And when the party was reconstructed under General Zia's auspices, it was considered useful that the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers should become virtually *ex-officio* presidents of the Central and Provincial Muslim Leagues.⁷²⁷

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⁷²⁴ Paula R. Newberg, *Judging the State*, op. cit., pp. 190-1.

⁷²⁵ 'Article 270A (as substituted by the Constitution Eighth Amendment Act, 1985, section 19): The Proclamation of the fifth day of July 1977, President's Orders, Ordinances, Martial Law Regulations, Martial Law Orders, including the Referendum Order, 1984 held on nineteenth day o 1984, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq became the President of Pakistan...'

⁷²⁶ *Viewpoint*, 25 August 1988 ('Between the Lines').

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*

Three weeks after my release from house arrest I was faced with another major turning point in my political life.

On 18 April 1984 at an MRD Central Working Committee's meeting held at Karachi, Wali Khan chose to announce that he was against the restoration of the 1973 Constitution and as far as he was concerned the Constitution 'was dead and buried'. A large number of the MRD leaders present, including myself, were left aghast. A number of them walked out in disgust and I was tempted to join them. When I protested to Khaliq Khan, a senior NDP colleague, he informed me that NDP's central committee had met in the NWFP three months earlier in January and had informally decided that a new constitution was necessary. Amazed at this piece of information I also then withdrew from the meeting.

That evening I informed Wali Khan of the grave embarrassment that he had caused me by repudiating the commitment given by me, on behalf of the NDP, to the FourPoint charter of the MRD. As party president I had been authorized by the NDP national council to do so. In fact the specific reference to the Constitution, in the MRD's charter, as he ought to have been aware, had been drafted by the NDP. Wali Khan then regretted his lapse and the following day announced his firm support for the 1973 Constitution.

A week later, on 25 April, the NDP's central committee held a meeting at Quetta, which I attended. At the evening session I briefly absented myself and went to offer condolences to the family of Mahmood Aziz Khurd who had recently died. During my absence a resolution was passed at the meeting demanding fresh elections for the formation of a new constituent assembly. My colleagues had decided to reject the 1973 constitution altogether. Also it is unfortunate that it was done in a furtive and underhanded manner. No one had the courage to inform me of this event while I was in Quetta. Only later, when I had returned to Karachi, did I learn about it. I was deeply disillusioned, later even more so, when after sixteen months, on 2 August 1986, Wali Khan did another volte-face by accepting the 1973 Constitution once again.

The actual issue was that Wali Khan and a number of his close supporters had come to the conclusion that a confederacy was the answer to the problems facing the smaller provinces. Zia's act of altering the 1973 Constitution beyond recognition had provided them the pretext of doing away with it altogether. To my mind a constitution was more than a mere booklet of paper to be thrown into the waste-paper basket after every few years to be replaced by another. While the 1973 Constitution was by no means a perfect document, it had been the only constitution in our nation's history that had been unanimously passed by a democratically elected parliament. And as such, it was worthy of sanctity. Once cleansed of all the trappings of dictatorship that had been appended to it by the likes of Bhutto and Zia, it was still a noble document. If it did not

adequately allocate power equitably between the provinces and the centre then with time and proper reflection it could be duly corrected.

For the next few months I remained undecided. I found it impossible to reject the 1973 Constitution, and at the same time the idea of resigning from the party I had myself founded was deeply disturbing. To my surprise within a matter of days I received messages of support from Bizenjo and his PNP. In early May Bizenjo suggested to me that NDP and PNP should merge to recreate the original NAP. During a second visit, on 18 May, Bizenjo, probably still holding bitter memories about Wali Khan's public chastisement at a NDP committee meeting in 1978,⁷²⁸ now urged me to announce a revival of NAP. I refrained from commenting and just listened to him. By 27 May his message, this time conveyed to me by his PNP colleague Yusuf Mustikhan, was even more overt: 'Take advantage of Wali Khan's absence abroad. Just revitalize NAP, revive Kaswar Gardezi as party secretary general, and we will join you as one'.⁷²⁹ As I have never been inclined towards politics of subterfuge and conspiracy, I just let the matter die quietly.

In the meantime I avoided all party activities. There were NDP central committee meetings held at Peshawar and Quetta that I did not attend. By late July my mind was made up to resign from the NDP. Rather than shock some of my close supporters and senior members of the party on the day I was to make the public announcement, I privately informed them of my decision. On 2 July with deep regret I cut my ties from the NDP and gave my reasons for doing so in public. In an interview given a month later I tried to summarize my views.

I was very dejected at the manner in which the 1973 Constitution has been brushed aside. My reaction was natural. I have always believed in the supremacy of the unanimously adopted constitution. This has been the very foundation of my politics. It is the basic point of the MRD declaration. From the PNA to the MRD we have been persistently demanding its restoration. But the amendments in this Constitution had not then been announced. In the light of this situation, the NDP resolution is meaningless. I am bound by the 1973 Constitution. It bears my signature [as well as Wali Khan's]. I cannot compromise on it under any circumstances. If at this juncture we go against this Constitution, what justification then is there to remain in the MRD. This would be tantamount to direct acceptance of the Martial Law. I am bound by MRD's Four-points. I have been [Chairman] of MRD's 'Pakistan Bachao' Committee. I have signed its declaration. I cannot overlook it...⁷³⁰

⁷²⁸ See, Chapter 10.

⁷²⁹ Diary entry: 27 May 1985.

⁷³⁰ *The Leader*, Karachi, (Interview by A. H. Haqani), 25 August 1985.

One fact that I could not help but point out to my former colleagues in the NDP was that the demand for the restoration of the 1973 Constitution was part of the five principal clauses in the preamble of the declaration leading to the formation of the NDP in November 1975. Even the NDP's commitment to the 1973 Constitution in the MRD charter had been endorsed officially by the party. What I did not wish to remind them was that when the NDP had been formed, most if not all, the prominent members of the Central Committee had not even joined it as they had then been languishing in Bhutto's jails.

On 19 July I heard on the BBC that Shahnawaz Bhutto had died in Cannes. I remembered him as a young boy and felt saddened by the tragedy that had struck the Bhutto family yet again. According to a report I received the following day Fakhri Gulzar, Nusrat Bhutto's niece, upon hearing the news, was said to have remarked that Shahnawaz had been suffering from acute depression. She had also revealed that his marriage had been close to disintegration as his wife wished to return to her home in Afghanistan.⁷³¹ Whether his death was caused by suicide or an accident was till the end impossible to establish. One of his former associates, Raja Anwar mentions that this sensitive youngster had previously suffered two nervous breakdowns.⁷³² It was reported that Shahnawaz had taken to carrying a vial of cyanide in case he was ever caught by Zia's men. The vial was found empty upon his death.⁷³³

The Bhutto family used Shahnawaz's death as a weapon against Zia by accusing him of being responsible. When Benazir Bhutto arrived in Pakistan bringing her brother's body for burial, it made for a powerfully emotive scene. She attracted enormous crowds. The sight of the thousands of people thronging to see her made her decide that it was time to renege on her commitment to the Zia regime. Signs of her new determination became apparent as she began taking active steps to dislodge Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi's senior position in the PPP hierarchy. In early December an exasperated Jatoi called on me to complain about Benazir's actions. It appeared that Benazir was building up his rivals, such as Qaim Ali Shah, Khaliquzzaman and others, to weaken Jatoi. According to him thirty percent of recently appointed PPP political office holders in Sindh were from his rival faction.⁷³⁴ A few months later, in April, Jatoi once again came to confer with me. He said that according to him Benazir had become impossibly arrogant. He said that now he had to decide whether 'to stay with the PPP, put up with personality cult worship and be constantly humiliated', or to venture out on his own.⁷³⁵

On 10 April 1986 Benazir Bhutto arrived in Lahore and was accorded a tumultuous reception. It was reported on the BBC that she addressed the largest public meeting ever

⁷³¹ Diary entry: 20 July 1985.

⁷³² Raja Anwar, *The Terrorist Prince*, op. cit., p. 191.

⁷³³ Diary entry: 9 December 1985.

⁷³⁴ Diary entry: 5 April 1986.

⁷³⁵ Diary entry: 19 April 1986.

held in the city. Excerpts from her speech were also broadcast in which she announced that if she had wanted to, she could have ordered the massive crowd, numbering hundreds of thousands, to level the Provincial Assembly building, the Army cantonment, and the houses of the government ministers. Emboldened by the crowds, she publicly asked Zia to resign forthwith and made a demand for immediate elections. Benazir Bhutto's mammoth gathering at Lahore served to unnerve the martial law authorities. Khawaja Khairuddin, who had continued to maintain his close links with the authorities, soon confessed to me that the military was perturbed. According to him the Governor of Sindh, General Jahan Dad Khan 'seemed quite worried at the tremendous success of Benazir's public meetings and processions, and their consequent impact within the country as well as abroad'. Khawaja Khairuddin intimated that the Junta now wanted a unified force of moderate political leaders to oppose Benazir.⁷³⁶

Benazir Bhutto announced 'Black Day' observances in July but as *Time* reported, 'the rallies gathered nowhere near the multitudes that had greeted Benazir on her return' only three months previously.⁷³⁷ Some of the other component parties of the MRD soon joined in with the PPP and also issued calls for immediate elections. 14 August 1986 was declared as the starting date for a nationwide campaign of non-violent civil disobedience. Junejo, who is earlier said to have resisted Zia's pressures to arrest Benazir, launched a crackdown. Soon after addressing an Independence Day crowd at Karachi, Benazir was arrested. The same day hundreds of MRD activists were similarly jailed. Within days the movement ground to a halt.

Having resigned from the NDP I was for the moment in the sidelines. While my sympathy was clearly with the movement I believed that it could have been better planned.

Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, a former MRD leader who organized the 1983 demonstrations, said ... that the government's mass arrest of opposition leaders effectively stopped the movement in its tracks. 'The authorities strategy was to preempt the campaign,' said Mazari. 'Benazir Bhutto has played into their hands. The first few days should be when the campaign reaches a peak, but this has not happened. The rallies have been disappointing'.⁷³⁸

After my resignation from the NDP I kept my own counsel for a number of months. During this period I received invitations from several party leaders to join up with them. Having given up on the idea of reviving NAP, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo was keen that I join him in his PNP. Asghar Khan personally invited me on two occasions, first, in February 1986, and then a few months later in August. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi was

⁷³⁶ *Time* (Asia edition), 21 July 1986, p. 13.

⁷³⁷ *Asiaweek*, Hong Kong, 31 August 1986, pp. 20-21.

⁷³⁸ The message was conveyed through Sanaullah, a senior journalist a representative of the newspaper *Hurriyat*. (Diary entry: 15 March 1986).

perhaps the most enthusiastic, and being aware of my severe allergy to his close political associate Khar, tried to bring about a patch up between us earlier. Khar had even sent a message to me asking for forgiveness.⁷³⁹ While admitting that Khar had behaved brutally during his days as governor of Punjab, Jatoi placed the blame squarely on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's shoulders. According to Jatoi, Khar had only been acting on Bhutto's orders. Then he made a very revealing confession: he said that Bhutto had also asked him to arrange the murder of a few people in Sindh, but unlike Khar in Punjab, he had chosen to 'decline politely'.⁷⁴⁰

I also received a message from Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan via an emissary. It was conveyed that if I expressed any sign or desire of joining the PDF, Nasrullah Khan would visit me in person to offer the invitation. While I appreciated these thoughtful gestures from my political colleagues, I was in no mood to join with any particular party. My recent experience with the NDP had made me wary of making uncautious commitments. At the same time I was receiving constant advice and encouragement from a variety of other sources. Mahmood Haroon told me that he was seriously contemplating forming a new political group with Jatoi and me, along with Fazle Haq, to represent NWFP, and Zafarullah Jamali, as the Balochistan representative.⁷⁴¹ And then there were others like Murtaza Pooya, owner of the Islamabad newspaper *The Muslim*, who initially wanted me to bring Asghar Khan's TIP, Noorani's JUP, Fazlur Rehman's JUI, the Muslim League and the Jamaat-i-Islami together on a single platform.⁷⁴² But then Pooya changed his mind a few months later, as he felt that the masses were 'totally disillusioned with the idea of any new alliance', and strongly advocated that I form a new party. The pressure to form a new party had been building up considerably over the past few months. A large number of senior NDP members, particularly in Sindh and Punjab, were disgruntled with the new leadership and were demanding an alternative.

After the creation of ANP by Wali Khan, the pressure on me increased considerably. It was no longer a question of forming a new party, but of reviving the old NDP. The task had become easier but nevertheless I sought advice of some of my senior political colleagues such as Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, Maulana Noorani and others. They all seemed very positive about the idea. The only person who thought somewhat otherwise was the octogenarian Ghulam Faruque Khan. He advised me that I needed 'to make enough money to be in politics'.⁷⁴³ His advice, though pertinent, was a bit late for me. Over the years I had been selling large segments of my agricultural property simply to stay in politics.

⁷³⁹ Diary entry: 30 July 1986.

⁷⁴⁰ Diary entry: 15 July 1986.

⁷⁴¹ Diary entry: 15 July 1986.

⁷⁴² Diary entry: 18 July 1985.

⁷⁴³ Diary entry: 24 September 1986.

In late September 1986 NDP was revived as a political party and on 26th of the month I was once again elected as its president.

* * *

In return for passing the 8th Amendment, the state of martial law had finally been lifted. Zia had now, as his Minister of the Interior Mahmood Haroon would tell me, 'placed himself in a very awkward position'.⁷⁴⁴ With the return to a 'civilian' system Zia soon learnt that his unlimited powers had been clipped. Junejo would not let him have his way when it came to the selection of the federal cabinet. General Arif observed:

Mr Junejo wanted a maximum number of new political personalities to help establish his own credibility. Sahibzada Yakub Khan was selected. Junejo accepted Dr. Mahbubul Haq, albeit reluctantly. Despite Zia's insistence, Mr. Junejo declined to accommodate Dr. Asad. A dejected Asad, who seemed to feel that Pakistan was worth living in only as a minister, resigned from the Senate and returned to the USA from where he had suddenly arrived to become a minister.⁷⁴⁵

Zia even found himself blocked when it came to appointing new governors. Once again Junejo successfully imposed his choice upon him. Zia had wanted retired Generals Habibullah Khan for the NWFP and Atiqur Rehman for the Punjab. Instead Ghafoor Hoti got NWFP and Sajjad Qureshi the Punjab. Retired General Musa was Junejo's choice for Balochistan and Ghous All Shah? the Sindh Chief Minister arranged for the incumbent governor, General Jahan Dad Khan, to retain his post.⁷⁴⁶ The simmering tensions between Zia and Junejo were to only get worse when Junejo started 'meddling' in army affairs. One such instance was when in March 1987 Junejo, who disliked General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, had him replaced as Director General of Inter-Services Intelligence with General Hamid Gul.⁷⁴⁷ It must have aggravated Zia considerably as Akhtar Abdur Rehman was his most dependable confidant at the time. Then among other actions directed at the army, Junejo proceeded to cause great vexation among the generals by reducing their official limousine size to pint-sized Suzuki motor cars. Clearly, Junejo was out to prove that he was not simply a product of Zia's martial law.

Having conceded a loss in his powers, Zia still held the most powerful job tightly in his grasp, for, unlike Ayub Khan, he had refused to relinquish the post of army chief. Nevertheless, reports were arriving of discord even within the army. Some senior

⁷⁴⁴ Diary entry: 15 July 1986.

⁷⁴⁵ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 239.

⁷⁴⁶ Diary entry: 7 January 1986. The information on the governor's appointment was given to me by the then Speaker's wife, Abida Hussai (Chandi) at Karachi.

⁷⁴⁷ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 243 and 395 (Gen Akhtar Rehman and Junejo apparently greatly disliked each other).

generals, by getting extensions to their tenures, had been blocking promotions of their subordinates. While Zia solved this problem by retiring these generals, there was no getting away from the fact that he himself was by far the worst culprit. At the time of his death in August 1988, he had been army chief for a record period of twelve and a half years-over four times the regulation tenure for the post.

There had already been two minor coup attempts against him from within the army: in 1980 a retired Major-General enlisted some officers in a plan to overthrow Zia. The plot was uncovered before it could be launched. Later, in 1984, Ghulam Mustafa Khar mustered the support of nineteen relatively junior officers (the senior-most being a colonel) and travelled to India and obtained a supply of weapons for them. Once again they were caught before they could make their move. Nevertheless, Zia was sitting on a potential powder keg of professional resentment for assuming unlimited personal charge of the country's armed forces.

* * *

The relationship between Zia and Junejo continued to deteriorate. In November 1987 without consulting Zia he sacked Sahibzada Yaqub Khan as Foreign Minister and took over the portfolio for himself. He then ordered the Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar to discontinue the previous practice of sending papers relating to all important foreign policy decisions to Zia. According to the Foreign Secretary, though this new procedure was constitutionally correct, 'Zia was not used to this, it upset him greatly'.⁷⁴⁸ Junejo would now try and hijack Pakistan's foreign policy on Afghanistan from the entrenched hands of Zia and his trusted colleague General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, the ISI chief.

Zia had been resisting the signing of the Geneva Accord on Afghanistan by demanding that a coalition government be installed in Kabul after the Soviet withdrawal. According to him, 'The three main components - the freedom fighters, the refugees and the present party in power - should form the government'.⁷⁴⁹ In reality he wanted the ISI-controlled seven resistance leaders (who formed the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahideen) to determine the future fate of Afghanistan. In late February 1988 Junejo circumvented Zia by shrewdly inviting all the opposition party leaders to a round-table conference to discuss Pakistan's position at the Geneva talks.

Junejo's invitation to me was delivered by one of his ministers, Kazi Abid, who, according to my diary:

tries to convince me about the sincerity of the government. [He] says Junejo is faced with Zia's attempts to foist an interim government headed by *Mujahideens*

⁷⁴⁸ Diego Cordovez and Selig Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, op. cit., p. 258.

⁷⁴⁹ *The Wall Street Journal*, New York, 1 December 1987 (Phillip Rezvin correspondent).

which is contrary to the initial 4-point demands made in the Geneva talks. So [the opposition leaders] must attend and thus help in strengthening the democratic process. [The] decision will be made by the government only after consulting all the political leaders.⁷⁵⁰

We met at Islamabad on March 1988. On the first day of the conference I experienced severe chest pains. As an early resolution to the quagmire in Afghanistan was of utmost importance to me, I decided that my health could briefly take a back seat. During my stay at Islamabad Junejo solicitously enquired about my health on the telephone every morning. He even suggested that I be examined by a medical board, but I declined politely as I was satisfied by the medical care I was already getting in Karachi. At the conference all the party leaders were given an opportunity to present their views. As expected the religious parties favored the representation of *Mujahideen* but all other party leaders including Benazir, Jatoi (representing his newly formed National People's Party), Wali Khan, Bizenjo, and myself, were solidly behind Junejo's move. While one of the more 'progressive' leaders created a brief hubbub when he referred to the Afghan refugees as 'cowardly deserters', the conference remained sedate and businesslike. To most the turmoil in Afghanistan was not simply a tragedy of a neighbor but a bleeding sore on the body politic of Pakistan. When it came to my turn to speak, I made it clear that while I did not recognize the legitimacy of Junejo's government, the issue before us was too vital to ignore because of our domestic political disputes.

The NDP President said that during the conference, he had urged the Government that any further delay in signing the accord would amount to playing with the very existence of Pakistan. He said that [our first] priority ... was that the refugees should return to their home safely and international guarantees be provided to ensure an independent and non-aligned Afghanistan where the people's will should be supreme. He said that after the military pullout by the Soviet Union, a caretaker government, acceptable to all concerned, could not only ensure Afghanistan's journey to democracy, but also play an effective role in preventing bloodshed.⁷⁵¹

In the end it was the support which Junejo received at the round-table which 'ultimately paved the way for the accord [being] signed'.⁷⁵² Junejo quickened the pace of the negotiations by abandoning Zia's demand for a coalition interim government in Kabul. A month later, on 14 April 1988, the Geneva accords were signed by Zain Noorani, Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Abdul Wakil, the Afghan Foreign Minister. While Junejo had triumphed at Geneva, the Pakistan military persisted with their single-minded aim of supporting the *Mujahideen*, in particular the Hizbe Islami led by Gulbadeen Hikmatyar. Later, once Hikmatyar proved a failure, the army would drop him in favor of the Taliban.

⁷⁵⁰ Diary entry: 28 February 1988.

⁷⁵¹ *Dawn*, Karachi. 9 March 1988.

⁷⁵² *Time*, 13 June 1988, p. 21.

Only four days before the signing of the agreement, disaster struck the Islamabad-Rawalpindi area. On 10 April the Ojhri ammunition dump, the main clearinghouse for US arms supplies to the Afghan Mujahideen, exploded. Located as it was halfway between the twin cities, there was a very destructive rain of missiles on both Islamabad and Rawalpindi. About a hundred people died and eleven hundred were wounded. A two-man Commission of Enquiry was quickly formed under General Imranullah Khan. The Commission submitted its report to a five-man ministerial committee which then submitted its classified recommendations to the Prime Minister. Junejo placed the blame directly on General Akhtar Abdur Rehman for selecting such a dangerous site in the first place, and then for keeping it in use for so long. General Hamid Gul, as the successor to Akhtar Abdur Rehman to the post of ISI chief, got the lesser blame as he had only taken charge the previous year. Junejo demanded the resignation of Akhtar Abdur Rehman, who had been elevated to the position of Joint Chief of Staff, from the army and the transfer of Hamid Gul from the ISI.⁷⁵³

Zia's reply was not long in coming. On 31 May he addressed a hastily arranged Press conference and announced the dismissal of the Junejo government and the dissolution of the National Assembly. The four provincial governments were also dismissed and the provincial assemblies dissolved by the governors.

The decision to sack Junejo would prove very costly to Zia. By subverting the very political system he had himself created, he had weakened his position. The general public perception was well summed up by the *Viewpoint*:

It needs ... to be remembered that if Junejo was poor prime ministerial material, he was the President's own choice, made with studied care; blame for his faults must, therefore, be shared equally by the appointing authority. Further, differences over Junejo's actions or inaction cannot be regarded as grounds for his dismissal by anyone who accepted him as the elected Prime Minister, backed by a National Assembly that was supposed to represent the people of Pakistan. On the other hand, for the people, the weaknesses and failures of the Junejo Government were certainly not unexpected, because they stem from the strange system given to the country after apolitical elections, with all the attendant venality and vote manipulation.⁷⁵⁴

Trapped as he was by his own 1985 version of the Constitution, Zia could no longer hoodwink the people with promises of phantom elections. A state of Martial Law no longer existed and he was now proscribed by his Constitution to hold elections within ninety days. He formed a caretaker government by appointing a hand-picked cabinet.

⁷⁵³ *Independent*, London, 31 May 1988, ('Zia reviles "Corrupt" Civilian Government').

⁷⁵⁴ *Viewpoint*, 2 June 1988.

Half the chosen ministers were from the previous Junejo cabinet, thereby belying his grounds for the dismissal. But with all the power back in his hands the 'old' Zia began to re-emerge. *Time* reported:

Although Zia initially announced that political parties could participate in elections for a new assembly within 90 days, he subsequently committed himself only to adhering to the constitution. His vagueness raised the possibility that he might yet declare a state of emergency or call a referendum to endorse his continued rule without elections.⁷⁵⁵

I was quoted in the same article as saying the 'past record of President Zia shows that he does not keep his promises. Therefore, I view his statement about the new elections with suspicion'.⁷⁵⁶

Clearly, after twelve long years the public wanted a change. The MRD, particularly Benazir Bhutto, was attracting enormous crowds. On 12 July Benazir Bhutto had a mammoth meeting at Mochi Gate in Lahore. Tens of thousands of her supporters braved the summer heat to hear her speak. Having allowed the formation of Muslim League, Zia could hardly prevent political parties from returning openly into the public arena. He was caught in a trap of his own making. With the prevailing mood of the public Zia risked incurring serious public unrest if he went back on his commitment and once more insisted upon holding party-less elections. It had become a very volatile situation.

Finding himself in a dilemma he tinkered around with ideas. He issued a Shariat Ordinance ostensibly to advance the use of Islamic jurisprudence. As one commentator said:

... the nomination of unqualified ulema to practice the law or act as *amicus curiae* and judges, or the induction of similar persons as muftis, will not help to make the dispensation of justice either smoother, speedier or more just. Apart from these important considerations, many observers believe that the whole exercise undertaken by President Zia with such speed and suddenness is meant primarily to put extensive powers in his hands - to be exercised through the President's nominees on various courts. The courts will be able to challenge almost all existing laws, and if this is allowed to happen it can lead to utter chaos in all major fields - political, social and economic.⁷⁵⁷

On 20 July Zia decided to announce the modalities of the elections. The election date was to be 16 November, which was 168 days after the dismissal of the Junejo

⁷⁵⁵ *Time*, 13 June 1988, p. 20.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ *Viewpoint*, 23 June 1988.

government, and in open contravention of the constitutional requirement of 90 days. Zia justified the delay by asserting that an earlier date was impossible because of the monsoon season, religious holidays, the absence of some 80,000 Haj pilgrims, and the need to redraw election districts to reflect population shifts. It was widely suspected that the real reason for the timing was because Benazir Bhutto was expecting her first child at the end of the year. Zia was hoping that being in the late stages of pregnancy, Benazir Bhutto would be unable to undertake a full election campaign.

The following day he dropped the bombshell. The elections would be conducted on a non-party basis and candidates would have to run as independents without party affiliations. When he was asked by the Press whether he expected the opposition parties to boycott the elections as they had done in 1985. Zia replied, They will all conform to the rules that I lay down for the game'.⁷⁵⁸

Time magazine reported:

Forcing candidates to run as independents means that in all probability Zia will be able to win the support of a majority of the legislators with offers of patronage and government posts. 'Judging from our history', said Sherbaz Khan Mazari, a leading politician, last week, 'there will be a long queue of politicians willing to sign up with Zia after the elections'.⁷⁵⁹

With Zia determined to cling onto power, and the mood of the masses clearly aspiring for a change, the future looked very volatile. In the months leading up to the November election there was every likelihood of violent upheavals in the urban streets, with rural Sindh probably in the lead. The police would be unable to cope, and the task would have to be relegated to the army. The question was: how would the troops feel about quelling riots in the streets of Lahore on the orders of their army chief? In 1977 during the PNA uprising, when Bhutto had only held the position of prime minister, the army had quickly reached its limits and eventually ousted him. Though the Pakistan Army had a history of overthrowing presidents and prime ministers, it had remained a highly disciplined force. Disobeying the directives of a senior officer, in this case General Zia, the Army Chief of Staff, would have been an act of mutiny.

* * *

The day he sacked Junejo, Zia went on television in the evening to justify his action to the nation. He stated:

⁷⁵⁸ *Time*, 1 August 1988, p. 20.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

[that] the Prime Minister was compelled to succumb to unwholesome political pressure, which led to rampant corruption, nepotism and maladministration, finally leading to a complete breakdown of morality and law and order in the country.⁷⁶⁰

If he had only added the word 'hypocrisy' to the charge then it would have been tailor-made to fit Zia himself. Never before in the history of Pakistan had the wheels of corruption, nepotism and flagrant theft of public property been so well-oiled as in Zia's twelve-year rule over Pakistan. Having taken power by force of military arms Zia remained insecure throughout his period of power. He placed loyalty at a premium and believed those opposed to him could be purchased at a price. While the fortunes of his family, such as his brother-in-law, soared, he actively bribed politicians with sugar mill licenses and other inducements to purchase their support. Zia's supporters also had a field day. Families such as the Choudhries of Gujrat, the Saifullahs of NWFP, the Sharifs of Lahore went on a binge of crony capitalism never witnessed before. The coffers of the nationalized banks were laid open to anyone with the appropriate loyalist connections. Quietly behind the scenes the country was being bled dry to fatten the few. Even the 'honest' Muhammad Khan Junejo was reported to have, with the help of a business partner, built himself a sugar mill after arranging a bank loan at the lowly interest rate of 3 percent.

Taking shelter behind his regular protestations of Islamic piety, Zia and his close companion General Abdur Akhtar Rehman managed to accumulate the most ill-gained wealth of all. The damning evidence of their corruption was revealed by none other than Akhtar Abdur Rehman's son, Humayun Akhtar. Shaheen Sehbaei, then the Islamabad correspondent of *Dawn*, writing about General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, related a revealing incident:

The riches remind me of a story told by [Humayun Akhtar Abdur Rehman] to me and another journalist friend in the early hours of one fine morning in the five star luxury hotel of Islamabad. All three of us were in good spirits and the General's son was speaking mostly against another son of a General, his one time friend but now deplored foe, Ejaz-ul-Haq.

'What does he boast about? He thinks he has a lot of money. I have made him a politician. I called him from the Gulf to play politics. He knew nothing and had nothing. What if now he has 250 million dollars. Is that all? Look at me. God has given us everything. Everything I say. Ejaz just has peanuts', he said thumping his chest with a straight hand.

⁷⁶⁰ *Dawn*, Karachi, 31 May 1988.

When we had left the hotel, we were wonder-struck at the audacity of the claim, but the revelation that Ejaz-ul-Haq was such a rich man had been drowned with the thought of how big the booty would be that he described as 'everything'.⁷⁶¹

Sehbai would repeat the story in his columns on two further occasions.⁷⁶² Later when Shaheen Sehbai was reminded about Humayun Akhtar's revealing admission he said:

I remember vividly my conversation with Humayun Akhtar on the subject. It was published not only twice but repeated many times in my columns and in others as well. At one stage Humayun virtually begged me to stop repeating it because he was feeling embarrassed. [The] interesting thing is that he never once denied either inheriting the money or bragging about it.⁷⁶³

It is not difficult to imagine where this vast wealth came from. The first real indication I received was when the new US Ambassador, Arnold Raphel called on me in September 1987.⁷⁶⁴ During our discussion on Afghanistan, he mentioned that the US government was deeply disappointed to discover that a significant portion of weaponry being supplied by them for the Afghan cause was ending up in foreign hands. Later I heard reports which suggested that with Zia's blessings General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, his personally chosen ISI chief with complete responsibility over Afghan policy, had siphoned off large quantities of US military hardware, destined for the Afghan *Mujahideens*, and sold to clandestine buyers. In the 1980s the shoulder-fired anti-aircraft Stinger missile was a highly restricted item of export from the US. Apart from certain NATO powers, only the Israelis had them. The *Mujahideens* got them only after much American soul-searching. Eventually the idea of Soviet gunships being shot down won the day. Subsequently they were found to be in possession of Iran⁷⁶⁵ and some Middle Eastern countries. There was a large variety of weaponry for sale and the international arms market were eager buyers.

⁷⁶¹ *Dawn*, Karachi. 11 June 1993, p. 8 ('Benazir's front foot attack').

⁷⁶² The second time Shaheen Sehbai mentioned the story was in *Dawn*, Karachi, 16 October 1993, p. 8 ('The Fragile House of Heavyweights'):

Humayun [Akhtar Khan] had all the reason to laugh in the new House, as he had beaten a PPP stalwart, Choudhry Aitzaz Ahsan, but had earned for himself the name of Humayun Dollar Khan, a reference to the huge trunks of dollar left behind by his ancestors who fought the recent Afghan wars.

By his own account Humayun had once joked about 250 million dollars that another son of a general Ejazul-Haq, gad claimed he had. 'God has given me everything', Humayun had boasted. 'What does Ejazul-Haq have peanuts', he has told me.

Shaheen Sehbai would repeat the story for the third time in *Dawn*, Karachi, 24 January 1995, p. 14 ('Babar Knocks Right-Wingers Hard').

⁷⁶³ E-mail from Shaheen Sehbai (*Dawn* correspondent in Washington to the writer, dated 28 July 1998).

⁷⁶⁴ Arnold Raphel, the US Ambassador visited me on 22 September 1987.

⁷⁶⁵ Diego Cordovez and Selig Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, op. cit., p. 316.

Apart from Zia's financial corruption, he was responsible, over a prolonged twelve year period, of eradicating the remnants of what Bhutto had left of our national institutions. The Supreme Court and other courts of the superior judiciary were rendered totally ineffectual, the bureaucracy was able to engage in unchecked corruption, the Press was subjugated by threats or grew accustomed to being wooed, some by means of chequebook journalism, and the armed forces came under a baneful influence. A number of senior military officers profited immensely from the opportunities that came their way. Corruption had by now seeped through every level of society; from electricity meter readers to high court judges. Businessmen found they could buy government policy decisions by leaving money-filled briefcases at government ministries and make fortunes by any means other than fair market competition. There were no checks whatsoever. The body politic had begun to rot from the core. All this was Ziaul Haq's doing.

Less than a month after announcing the party-less elections Zia died when his C-130 plane crashed shortly after taking off from Bahawalpur. A number of senior military officers perished with him, including General Akhtar Abdur Rehman. The sudden death of Zia who had monopolized the national stage for twelve years left the country in a dazed state.

Among the dead were two Americans, the US Ambassador, Arnold Raphel and General Herbert Wassom, head of the US military-aid mission to Pakistan. Normally the US Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has the statutory authority to investigate suspicious plane crashes involving US citizens. The FBI's Counter-terrorism Section had already assembled a team of forensic experts to search for evidence at Bahawalpur, but it was told to keep out of Pakistan. Instead the US sent six airforce accident investigators - and excluded any criminal, counterterrorist or sabotage experts - to assist Pakistan's official enquiry into the crash.

Relevant sections of the 365-page secret report compiled by the six American Air Force experts were revealed to an American investigative journalist and author Edward Jay Epstein who wrote:

First, they were able to rule out the possibility that the plane had been blown in mid-air. If it had exploded in this manner the pieces of the plane, which had different shapes and therefore different resistance to the wind, would have been strewn over a wide area - but that had not happened. By reassembling Pak One like a giant jigsaw puzzle, and scrutinizing with electron-microscope scanners the edges of each piece, they could establish the plane had been intact when it hit the ground.

Nor had the plane been hit by a missile. That would have generated intense heat, which in turn would have melted the aluminium panels, and as the plane dived, the wind would have left telltale streaks in the molten metal. But there were no streaks on the panels. And no missile parts or other ordnance was found near the crash site.⁷⁶⁶

The investigators also conclusively proved that the plane was in sound mechanical order, with all its systems functioning properly. In fact they established that the engines were running at full speed when the plane hit the ground. Furthermore, the pilots were absolved from any error.

The crash had occurred moreover in perfectly clear daytime weather. And the pilots were experienced with the C-130 and in good health. Since the plane was not in any critical phase of the flight, such as takeoff or landing, where poor judgment on part of the pilots could have resulted in a mishap, the investigators ruled out pilot error as a possible cause.⁷⁶⁷

In the end the investigators could only lead to one logical conclusion:

Having ruled out all mechanical malfunctions that could cause a C-130 to fall from the sky in the manner Pak One fell, the American team could only conclude that 'the only other possible cause of the accident is the occurrence of a criminal act or sabotage leading to the loss of aircraft control.

The conclusion was reinforced when an analysis of chemicals found in the plane's wreckage discovered traces of pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN), an explosive commonly used by saboteurs. As well as antimony and sulphur. Pakistani ordnance experts reconstructed a low-level explosive detonator that could have been used to burst a flask the size of a soda can, which, the board suggested, could have contained an odorless poison gas that incapacitated the pilots.⁷⁶⁸

Epstein interviewed several American chemical warfare experts on the poison gas that may have been used, then added:

the chemical agents capable of instantly knocking out a flight crew, while extremely difficult to obtain, are not beyond the reach of any intelligence service or underground group with connection to one....[T]he American-manufactured VX nerve gas is odorless, easily transportable in liquid form, and a tiny quantity would be enough, when dispersed by a small explosion and inhaled, to cause

⁷⁶⁶ 'How General Zia Went Down', Edward Jay Epstein, *Vanity Fair* (New York), June 1989, p. 54.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

paralysis and loss of speech within thirty seconds. According to the scientific expert, the residue it would leave behind would be phosphorus. And as it turned out, the chemical analysis of debris from the cockpit showed heavy traces of phosphorus.

In support of his contention that the pilots were rendered unconscious or dead by means of poison gas, Epstein mentions that crew members of the other military planes in the vicinity overheard the conversation that took place on radio between Zia's plane and the Bahawalpur control tower. There was three to four minutes silence after Pak One failed to respond. Then a faint voice in Pak One was heard to call out, 'Mashood, Mashood', which was later identified to be that of Brigadier Najib Ahmed, Zia's military secretary. The faintness of his voice was ascribed to the fact that the Brigadier would not have been in the cockpit and was perhaps shouting at the crew from the rear.⁷⁶⁹ Epstein reached two conclusions from this piece of evidence. First, the radio was working and had been switched on. Secondly, Wing Commander Mashood, the pilot (along with the co-pilot, the navigator, and the engineer), was not heard to respond to the frantic calls.

Going by the US investigating team's report and Epstein's account of the plane crash one clear fact emerges and that is that Zia's was a successful assassination. This next leads to the all-important question: Who killed Zia? Not surprisingly there were many theories involving the Al-Zulfikar, Afghanistan's intelligence agency Khad, the Soviet KGB, India's RAW and the US CIA. It is worth examining each theory.

While Al-Zulfikar had already made two unsuccessful missile attacks on Zia, it was strictly a ragtag army. It had access to hand-held surface-to-air missiles but clearly no missiles were involved in the crash of Zia's plane. It is unlikely that Al-Zulfikar had the resources or the contacts to acquire highly restricted nerve gas. By 1988 Al-Zulfikar had very few active members and even fewer international contacts, and despite Murtaza Bhutto's initial attempt at claiming credit for the assassination, it was sheer bravado on his part to enhance his image. No one took his claim seriously. Even when he returned to Pakistan, when he was accused of several acts of terrorism, Zia's death was not one of them.

Afghanistan's Khad might have been able to obtain the gas from the USSR but the intelligence agency lacked professional expertise. It specialized in arresting and brutally interrogating the perceived enemies of its communist government. While Khad was often engaged in recruiting mercenaries to explode bomb devices all over Pakistan, these acts of terrorism involved relatively low-tech devices. A small explosive detonator triggered by a plane increasing its altitude was probably beyond their operatives.

⁷⁶⁹ Brigadier Najib Khan's shout was probably due to uncontrolled 'phungoid' up and down pitching the C-130 was undergoing because of lack of pilot control. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Besides their operatives, mostly Pathans, would have found it extremely difficult to breach the army security at Bahawalpur.

The KGB had all the resources to carry out the assassination. At the time of Zia's death it was one of the prime candidates. There was a feeling that Zia's role in the USSR's humiliating defeat in Afghanistan provided the Soviets with a strong motive of revenge. This theory overlooked the changed political conditions then current in the USSR. It was an era of Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika*, the era of Stalinist mentality of terror and brute force was well past. Besides, the desperate economic conditions had placed foreign financial aid as one of the major priorities of Gorbachev's government. It is unlikely he would have wished to have risked an international scandal involved in killing a staunch ally of the west as Zia was then perceived to be because of his role in Afghanistan. The cutting off of badly needed western assistance because of an act of international terrorism was probably the last thing Gorbachev would have wanted at this time.

India's RAW was another leading suspect in Zia's killing. Revenge for Indira Gandhi's death at the hand of Sikh nationalists, who had been provided with Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers and sanctuaries by Zia, was considered to be a prime motive. While over the decades intelligence agencies of both countries had engaged in serious acts of terrorism against each other, neither had ever targeted each other's political leaderships, for obvious reasons. There is little information on RAW other than the fact the Indian Press often derided it for its incompetence and inferiority in comparison to Pakistan's ISI. RAW could have obtained the vital poison gas but whether it could have found an operative at such short notice capable of breaching the strict army security surrounding Zia's plane remains open to question.

The final and much-accused suspect was the American CIA. Zia had been a staunch ally of the US throughout the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and it was only during the Geneva Accords the two governments diverged in their views. Besides, in the end the problem abated when the agreement was signed after Junejo bypassed Zia's intransigence on the issue. There appears to be insufficient motives for the CIA to have been involved. Nevertheless, even assuming there was one, could the CIA have done it?

In the 1950s, 1960s and well up till the early 1970s there is no doubt that the CIA was covertly involved in the assassination attempts of several international leaders. Ngo Dinh Diem of South Viet Nam (1963) and Salvador Allende of Chile (1973) were two Presidents whose deaths were abetted by the CIA. In the 1960s the CIA was also actively engaged in several unsuccessful assassination attempts of Fidel Castro of Cuba. In the mid-1970s in the post-Watergate era of weakened executive control and a domineering Congress, the Legislative branches of government severely restricted the

CIA's covert activities.⁷⁷⁰ In 1981 President Reagan issued an Executive Order 12333 which said: 'Prohibition on assassination. No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination'.⁷⁷¹ The directive was very clear and unambiguous. After that US attempts to kill leaders such as Qaddafi of Libya (1986) and Saddam Hussain of Iraq (1991) have been blatantly overt events carried out under express presidential sanction. So, it would appear that the CIA, with its covert activities having become severely curtailed, could not have done so without incurring the wrath of its President as well as its Congress.

It was reported that in the final weeks Zia had become increasingly insecure and would refuse any engagements outside the capital. He was said to have lost trust in all but the closest of his companions, such as General Akhtar Abdur Rehman. His trip to see the Abrams tank demonstration in Bahawalpur was a departure from recently adopted practice of staying put in Rawalpindi. According to his son Ejaz-ul-Haq, 'his father had been persuaded to go to the tank demonstration that day by his generals, despite his misgivings'.⁷⁷²

It was said that a particular general 'was extraordinarily insistent in his phone calls. [The Major-General] argued that the entire army command would be there that day, and implied that if Zia were absent it might be taken as a slight'.⁷⁷³

General Akhtar Abdur Rehman had not been invited. According to General Arif, General Akhtar was exceedingly eager to get invited on the trip to Bahawalpur.⁷⁷⁴ His sons insist that he was manipulated into going. It is claimed that General Akhtar was advised by a colleague that Zia was on the verge of making major changes in the army and intelligence high command and suggested that his counsel would be needed.⁷⁷⁵ Sons of both Zia and Akhtar Abdur Rehman, according to Epstein who interviewed them, were of the opinion that their fathers had both been lured to Bahawalpur.

Zia's plan to visit Bahawalpur was made within a few days of the scheduled tank demonstrations. His state of insecurity would have ensured that his travel would have been known only to a few people. It is unlikely the news would have reached any of the suspected saboteurs, and if it did they would have little time to put any plan into action on the ground at Bahawalpur. Nor would they have been able to, as Epstein puts it, 'stop the planned autopsies at a military hospital, stifle interrogations, or for that matter,

⁷⁷⁰ In 1950 covert action had taken up to 50 percent of the CIA budget 1975 it was down to about 4 percent: Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA*, Simon and Schuster, UK, 1987, p. 64.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

⁷⁷² 'How General Zia Went Down', Edward Jay Epstein, op. cit., p. 46.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁷⁷⁴ General K. M. Arif, *Working with Zia*, op. cit., p. 405.

⁷⁷⁵ 'How General Zia went down', Edward Jay Epstein, op. cit., p. 42.

keep the FBI out of the picture'.⁷⁷⁶ Later the original ISI enquiry into the crash was transferred to a civilian committee formed under F. K. Bandial.

While it is hard to find solid evidence to establish the real truth behind Zia's crash, it does look as if it might have been a surgical coup. And if this was the case then in the absence of proof, it would be unjust to point the finger at those who had invited Zia to Bahawalpur. They may have quite simply and innocently provided others with the opportunity to carry out their plan. If a coup of sorts did take place then it was clearly not an act of ambitious officers wishing their chance at power. It would have been more in a vein of a cleansing of the system. The coup plotters would have believed that they were saving the country and the army from the destructive path that Zia was bent upon taking following Junejo's dismissal. Zia's refusal to yield control over the country, and the army, as well his accumulation of vast wealth, had probably damaged his case beyond repair.

Ten years after the crash the truth remains buried in a mysterious maze. In his memoirs General Arif berates the subsequent Benazir Bhutto administration for its indifference, quite ignoring that the real power during those days remained vested in the hands of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and General Mirza Aslam Baig, both creations of General Zia. Perhaps General Arif should have questioned them for their inaction. Were they perhaps wary of stirring up a hornet's nest?

* * *

After the civil disobedience campaign of August 1986 fizzled to a halt, the political parties were forced to go back to the drawing boards. It had become apparent even to Benazir Bhutto, that the ability to draw large crowds to meetings was insufficient in itself unless it was converted into a movement against Zia. But the time was not yet ripe and it was hard to tell when the tide would turn.

Benazir Bhutto visited me in April 1987, in the company of her cousin Fakhri Gulzar. She discussed some of the problems being encountered in the PPP with the 'leftist and regionalist elements, and her efforts to contain them. She was articulate in expressing her views in matters of domestic and foreign policy and we seemed to share a similarity of opinion on many points. When Benazir Bhutto asked for 'my moral support and appealed for my personal co-operation', I readily agreed. This would prove to be the first of many meetings we would have over the following eighteen months.⁷⁷⁷

Having restarted the NDP in September 1986, I was determined the party would chart a distinct course of its own. All prospective members were told in clear terms that if they

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁷⁷⁷ Diary Entry: 29 April, 1987.

wished to get into power then the NDP was clearly the wrong political party for them. I even discouraged my friend Fazle Haq, now retired from the army, from joining.⁷⁷⁸ The role for the NDP; in my opinion, was now a missionary one. Over a period of sixteen years I had established good relations with political leaders of most persuasions, both religious and progressive. It was the goal of the NDP to play a unifying role among the divergent Opposition parties. Without a semblance of unity, there was little chance of success against Zia. And, a common understanding among political parties. I was convinced, could only take place by a general acceptance of the 4-point charter of the MRD, in other words, by upholding the original unamended Constitution of 1973 and demanding that elections be held according to its conditions.

In June 1987 Nawabzada Nasrullah announced the holding of an 'All Parties Conference' (APC). Later when he visited me to request NDP's participation at this meeting I demurred. The PDF seemed unhappy with the MRD and felt that a larger political grouping was necessary, and hence his call for the APC. I told him 'that unless he [was] sure of some positive and concrete results' there was little point in holding an APC. I warned him that if the meeting 'proved to be of no particular purpose it would create further public despondency and distrust of political parties'.⁷⁷⁹ Later Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Ghous Buksh Bizenjo made separate attempts to coax me into attending the APC but I resisted. The reasons for my refusal were plain. The APC had also invited those who had participated in the party-less elections of 1985 including those who were members of Zia's cabinet. In the end the APC ended in a fiasco with both Wali Khan's Awami National Party (ANP) and the PPP accusing the sponsors of being in secret collusion with Junejo in trying to sabotage the MRD and creating a larger alliance. Due to the actions of some of these MRD component party leaders, the MRD had by now all but collapsed. Subsequently when I met Benazir Bhutto she expressed a feeling of political isolation and seemed convinced that 'the "old guard" of Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and Fazlur Rehman' were conspiring against her 'in support of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi'.⁷⁸⁰ I could sense her mood of deep despondency. A few months earlier she had sent a message asking me 'to take the lead...as she was convinced that the establishment would never allow her to come into power'.⁷⁸¹ I had quietly declined the offer. It appeared that Benazir Bhutto had decided that I could be trusted as an impartial observer.

By February 1988 Benazir Bhutto became even more disheartened by, what she termed as, 'betrayals of her party members' and seemed particularly upset with Mir Afzal Khan and Hazar Khan Bijarani for deserting the PPP. She dejectedly, as my diary entry states 'admits that it will become more and more difficult to find [suitable PPP] candidates for

⁷⁷⁸ Diary Entry: 25 May 1987.

⁷⁷⁹ Diary Entry: 17 June 1987.

⁷⁸⁰ Diary Entries: 22 and 24 September 1987.

⁷⁸¹ Diary Entry: 2 June 1987 (Benazir Bhutto's message was conveyed me by Ghulam Faruque Khan).

the elections'.⁷⁸² She was not the only depressed politician. The political climate had stagnated significantly. Professor Ghafoor Ahmed believed that 'Zia was fully in control' and suggested that I play 'a role in bringing democratic forces together'.⁷⁸³ He seemed in favor of the Jamaat-i-Islami holding informal discussions with the PPP and requested my assistance. Later Benazir Bhutto would also ask me to contact the Jamaat-i-Islami, JUP and Jatoi's NPP with regard to a proposal asking Junejo for a formation of a 'Supreme Council' to supervise the elections scheduled in 1990.⁷⁸⁴

On 29 May 1988 Zia sacked Junejo. The following day I received a telephone call from my friend Fazle Haq who informed me that he was meeting Zia at 10 p.m. that evening and would be appointed as the new chief minister of the NWFP. He then told me that Zia wished to know, if I was willing to be made the Governor of Balochistan or a Federal Minister, as Asghar Khan had already agreed. I refuse and tell him that I'm not a sellable commodity'.⁷⁸⁵

The dismissal of the Junejo government and the news of impending elections threw most political parties in a tumult.

While parties soon became engaged in busily creating election alliances, there remained a strong shadow of doubt about Zia's intentions. In early July Professor Ghafoor Ahmed returned from a trip to the Punjab and told me that the caretaker government, worried about the sudden upsurge in PPP's popularity, was desperately trying to unite all the factions of the Muslim League under a 'single banner'.⁷⁸⁶ Other reports reaching me had also indicated that the political momentum was shifting heavily in PPP's favor. Given Zia's obsessive hatred for the party it was likely that he would be planning frantically to extricate himself from the situation.

On 20 July Zia announced in the evening that he would not be following the constitutional requirement of holding the elections within ninety days of a government's dismissal, but instead would hold them on 16 November. The following evening Professor Ghafoor Ahmed dropped in to discuss Zia's announcement and flagrant violation of his own 1985 Constitution. Neither of us were convinced that Zia had, as yet, revealed his full hand. Partyless elections, we believed, were sure to follow. Shortly afterwards during the same evening, Benazir Bhutto accompanied by Farooq Leghari visited me. She was now bubbling with confidence, undoubtedly as a result of the massive turn-out at her recent Mochi Gate public meeting at Lahore. The PPP wanted an election pact that would remain in force even if Zia declared party-less elections. I did not think, given the upsurge in PPP support, that any of the other parties

⁷⁸² Diary Entry: 10 February 1988.

⁷⁸³ Diary Entry: 2 February 1988.

⁷⁸⁴ Diary Entry: 26 May 1988.

⁷⁸⁵ Diary Entry: 30 May 1988.

⁷⁸⁶ Diary Entry: 5 July 1988.

in the MRD would object.⁷⁸⁷ Shortly after they left I learnt from the Press that Zia had just declared that the elections would be party-less. By now Zia could no longer spring surprises, as for over eleven years we all had been given a prolonged opportunity to come to terms with his deceitful nature. This time he had managed to only pull a shabby looking rabbit out of a moth-eaten hat.

In the meantime political parties continued with their pre-election maneuverings. Maulana Noorani, during a visit, bemoaned that his volunteer workers had been armed to protect themselves from the threats they had received from the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM),⁷⁸⁸ nevertheless he was confident of his chances. Karachi by now had unfortunately fallen into a spiral of violence between Sindhi extremists and the Urdu-speaking community. After Noorani Mian's visit I would note in my diary, 'unfortunately [the old Karachi politicians] are living in a fool's paradise by not realizing that the local political situation has dramatically changed in favor of ethnic groups'.⁷⁸⁹ On the national scene, Jatoi, according to Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, was trying to use his services to make amends with Benazir Bhutto. And, Asghar Khan, who called on me along with his close advisor Khurshid Kasuri, advocated the holding of 'unity talks of all political parties to at least cooperate with each other during the elections'.⁷⁹⁰

From government sources I learnt that in Punjab the chief minister, Nawaz Sharif, had privately announced that he would see to it that all the government's nominees were elected within the Punjab province. According to them arrangements were already in place to rig the election results.⁷⁹¹ But the government party, the Muslim League, then suffered a major setback. A meeting was held of the Muslim League at Islamabad, on 13 August, where 'a concerted bid was made by the gang of four Chief Ministers to capture the Muslim League'.⁷⁹² Violence broke out between Junejo supporters and the government usurpers. Mir Afzal Khan, who was present at the meeting, would later tell me that total pandemonium prevailed as the party attempted to select a new Muslim League president.⁷⁹³ During the scenes of chaos, several leaders were badly manhandled, including the chief minister from Punjab. In the end both sides retired hurt, and decided to set up their own sub-branches of the official Muslim League.

Suddenly, on 17 August, like a bolt from the blue, Zia perished in his aircraft near Bahawalpur. Two days later Benazir Bhutto, accompanied by Farooq Leghari, and

⁷⁸⁷ Diary Entry: 21 July 1988.

⁷⁸⁸ Now known as the Muttahida Qaumi Movement.

⁷⁸⁹ Diary Entry: 28 July 1988.

⁷⁹⁰ Diary Entry: 4 August 1988.

⁷⁹¹ Diary Entry: 4 August 1988 (The information about the Punjab government's election plans had originated from Nasrullah Drishak, the a provincial minister in the Punjab government).

⁷⁹² *Viewpoint*, 8 December 1988 ('Between the Lines').

⁷⁹³ Diary Entry: 16 August 1988.

retired General Tikka Khan, came to call on me.⁷⁹⁴ Initially she expressed her anger at the fact that some MRD leaders, such as Asghar Khan, Wali Khan and Nawabzada Nasrullah, had opted to attend Zia's state funeral. In view of the wave of sympathy generated for Zia by the media, by attending his funeral, I told her, the politicians were taking advantage of the publicity. It was mere politics on their part. She did not agree with my view. Benazir Bhutto expressed her concern about future army interference in politics. We then agreed that all political parties should now be careful in their public utterances, adopt a moderate stance, and openly extend cooperation to the new government, thereby preempting any possible objection from the armed forces. She then asked me to convey a message to the generals on her behalf, saying that she would be far more accommodative in her political approach in the future. Surprised by her request, I pointed to General Tikka sitting beside us and said, 'You should use him, after all he is a former Army Chief of Staff. Tikka looked a bit crestfallen, and Benazir Bhutto added, 'They don't listen to him anymore'.⁷⁹⁵

Despite Acting-President Ghulam Ishaq Khan publicly proclaiming his commitment to holding elections on 16 November, his actions belied his claim, and disbelief continued to prevail. Ghulam Ishaq Khan's declaration of a state of emergency was not well received, nor was his decision to delay appointing a caretaker Prime Minister and Cabinet. In the meantime the provincial caretaker governments, which had been widely adjudged to be partisan, continued to be in office. Within days of Zia's death I publicly castigated the Acting-President for not dismissing Zia's appointees, but to my surprise the newspapers toned down my criticism when my statements appeared in the Press.⁷⁹⁶ For a long period uncertainty existed about whether in fact the elections would ever be held. As late as 22 September Muzaffar Hussain Shah, who later become chief minister Sindh, meeting me at a dinner, confessed that he was firmly of the opinion that the elections would not be held.⁷⁹⁷ The election issue was finally resolved by the Supreme Court only a month before they were held. The Courts announced that the elections should not only be held, but be held on a party-basis. Soon thereafter the scramble for party election tickets began.

Zia's unexpected death had also brought about a change in the thinking of some of the political parties. While PPP remained keen to continue their dealings with Professor Ghaffar Ahmed, he now found it impossible to carry on with the discussions. The Jamaat-i-Islami hierarchy was no longer eager to associate with the PPP. Even Jatoi who had earlier expressed a desire to resolve his differences with the Bhutto ladies had changed his mind.

⁷⁹⁴ Though her husband Asif Zardari came along with her as well, he did not participate in any of our discussions and sat in another room.

⁷⁹⁵ Diary Entry: 19 August 1988.

⁷⁹⁶ *Dawn*, Karachi, 27 August 1988 and *Nawa-i-Waqt*, Karachi, 27 August, 1988.

⁷⁹⁷ Diary Entry: 22 September 1988.

At the same time there were others of the opinion that the PPP would sweep the polls. The queues of prospective candidates at the gates of Bilawal House resembled a scene akin to a public fairground. Much to my astonishment a large number of PPP members even began besieging me to intercede on their behalf, and obtain a party election ticket for them, their sons or their nephews. When I told them that I had nothing whatsoever to do with their party, I would be told, 'We know that, but Benazir listens to you'. Despite the persistence of these people I never passed on their requests. To me nothing could have been more ridiculous.

A journalist commenting on the scene said:

If the number of ticket-seekers was any clue to a party's rating in the public the PPP would easily qualify as the favorite, Sometimes public perceptions become more decisive than reality and the PPP has managed to stage a show of its 'grand revival' by opening its doors to all and sundry. Gone are the days when the PPP leadership was choosy and discreet in accepting in its ranks politicians of suspect loyalty; among new entrants are deserters of all hues, vocal adversaries, collaborators of martial law and even those who served as ministers in the Zia regime...[T]he PPP leadership seems all set to play on the government party's wicket, by admitting all the elements who have any measure of personal influence, regardless of their orientation, reputation or track record. The party apparatus is being geared to the requirements of an electoral exercise where big money and personal influence will be the big determinants.⁷⁹⁸

On 4 October a retired Brigadier, visited my house. During our conversation he told me 'The Chief wants to meet with you!' Slightly perplexed I replied 'What Chief?' With a smile he replied, The new Chief of Army Staff. General Mirza Aslam Baig'. Getting even more confused I asked him, 'Why?' According to the Brigadier, Mirza Aslam Baig was currently meeting leading political leaders. Having always opposed the Army's role in politics most of my life, the idea of meeting him did not enthuse me particularly. I told the Brigadier that it would be difficult for me to travel to Islamabad at such short notice. Remaining unconcerned, he said that the General was visiting Karachi soon and that I could meet him privately at his guesthouse without anyone finding out about it. Meeting Generals secretly held even less appeal for me. Realizing my reticence, the Brigadier asked me to think over it and left smiling with a warning that, 'Not meeting him could result in a loss for you!'⁷⁹⁹ I never did meet Mirza Aslam Baig. But quite coincidentally, I met the Brigadier again on 7 October as I was being taken in through the front door at Bilawal House, Benazir Bhutto's residence, where she had invited me for afternoon tea. The Brigadier, who was being escorted out by Farooq Leghari,

⁷⁹⁸ Professor Khalid Mahmud, *Pakistan's Political Scene 1984-1990*, Rhotas Books, Lahore, 1990, pp. 128-9 (Excerpt from a newspaper column titled 'The Tricky Game of Political Alignments', written by the author which was originally published on 28 October 1988).

⁷⁹⁹ His actual words were 'Agar ap nahin milain gay to phir ap ka nuksaan ho suk tha hai'.

clasped his hands above his head and smiled at me indicating that unlike me, Benazir Bhutto had accepted the General's invitation to meet with him. I never did learn what was in the General's mind, but ten days later I was able to make a fair guess. At this stage Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the ISI were preparing the groundwork for the formation of the Islamic Democratic Alliance, which was later renamed Islami Jamhoori Itehad (IJI). Why the General wished to meet with the target of the projected alliance seems to be a bit of a mystery, unless he wanted to investigate her future plans for himself.

A fortnight before IJI was officially formed, Fazle Haq, then chief minister NWFP, who knew what was happening behind the scenes, had sent me a private message that he wanted me to go with him to meet Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab chief minister.⁸⁰⁰ Fazli knew by then that I might be planning to stand from Rajanpur and perhaps wanted to make things easier for me during the elections. Unaware of what was being hatched, and reluctant as I always was about backdoor politics, I expressed my reluctance and declined his invitation.

The formation of the IJI was officially announced in the second week of October. It was an alliance of seven parties, of which the government-sponsored Muslim League (Fida group) was the major component, with the Jamaat-i-Islami and Jatoti's NPP playing second fiddle. The remaining four parties were of no significance. The IJI had been created at the behest of Ghulam Ishaq Khan and with General Hamid Gul's ISI providing its full assistance, with the sole intention of opposing the PPP.

While some of the MRD component parties were demanding a larger share of the seats, the PPP responded by making a token gesture of announcing that it would not be putting up candidates against the top MRD leaders. Though they later went back on their word, by this maneuver the PPP initially defused the acrimony that usually develops in such situations, and successfully overcame the demands that it considered unreasonable. The PPP also promised to share power with its former MRD allies if it won the election and left the door open for future cooperation. Having left a few seats for the MRD leaders, the PPP adopted a 'go-it-alone' election policy and confronted the IJI alliance head-on.

Once the election had been announced I had to decide upon a constituency to stand from. My first preference was Karachi, as it had been my place of residence since the early 1950s, and my second option was from Kashmir-Kandkot seat in the Jacobabad district of northern Sindh. The Kashmir area, which abutted my home district of Rajanpur, had been part of the original pre-British Mazari Tuman and contained a large population of Mazari tribesmen. Besides the Mazaris in the Kashmir area, there were influential pockets of strong NDP support in the Kandkot and Jacobabad area.

⁸⁰⁰ Diary Entry: 23 September 1988.

Rather than choose hastily I let the matter rest until the final dates for the elections were sorted out. In late June while I was discussing the coming elections with Benazir Bhutto at Hakim AH Zardari's dinner at Karachi, she expressed her keenness for me to stand either from the Rajanpur seat or from the Defence-Clifton area of Karachi. While she had made it clear that the PPP would not put up a candidate against me, she confided that her father-in-law Hakim Ali Zardari was 'pleading' that the PPP election ticket for Rajanpur be given to Ashiq Mazari.⁸⁰¹ Some weeks later, when I related what his daughter-in-law had told me to Hakim Ali Zardari, he became visibly embarrassed and mumbled some non-sequiturs before changing the topic of conversation.⁸⁰² After the elections were over, in December Ashiq Mazari called on me while I was at Islamabad. During our meeting he confessed that he had paid the sum of Rs. 2,500,000 to Zardari to obtain a PPP ticket for the elections.⁸⁰³ Later when I mentioned the matter to Zardari, he insisted that he had accepted the money as donation for the PPP party fund.

In the meantime I had been getting reports that my position was extremely strong in the Kashmir-Kandkot constituency. I had also been receiving delegations of influential people from that area - such as Darya Khan Khoso, Mir Sunder Khan Sunderani and others - appealing for me to contest from their constituency. It appeared that my likely rival in this constituency, Hazar Khan Bijarani, was beset with a serious squabble among his supporters. About the same time I had also become convinced that MQM's strong ethnic appeal was about to change Karachi's political landscape. Logic dictated that my choice would have to be northern Sindh.

On 13 July my elder brother, Mir Balakh Sher, flew from Lahore and suddenly arrived at my doorstep insisting that I stand from our family seat at Rojhan. He tried to dissuade me from standing from northern Sindh and told me that our home district was the place for me to contest the elections. Having already decided to stand from northern Sindh, I told my brother, it would now be difficult to reverse my position.⁸⁰⁴

Zia's death on 17 August and the declaration of a state of emergency by the Acting-President created a climate of political confusion. Once the dust began to slowly settle people began to refocus on the 16 November elections. On 23 August I received a visit from Shaukat Mazari, Ashiq's son-in-law, and a veteran PPP member. He told me that 'his chairperson (Benazir Bhutto) had high regard for me and says that she will support me from whichever constituency that I decide to stand'.⁸⁰⁵ Much to his relief, and to his father-in-law's relief, I informed him that I had no intention to contest from Rajanpur.

⁸⁰¹ Diary Entry: 24 June 1988.

⁸⁰² Diary Entry: 6 August 1988.

⁸⁰³ Diary Entry: 3 December 1988.

⁸⁰⁴ Diary Entry: 13 July 1988.

⁸⁰⁵ Diary Entry: 23 August 1988.

In mid-September I made a tour of central Punjab where I met with a number of other politicians, including Qazi Hussain Ahmed, the Jamaat-i-Islami chief, who expressed great reluctance about the PPP. At the same time and quite unasked, he volunteered that 'he would support me unreservedly' wherever I chose to stand from. From Farooq Leghari I learnt that my brother Mir Balakh Sher had been trying to join the PPP but had been unsuccessful in his attempt. When I met my brother at Lahore he still seemed quite uncertain about his election plans but by the time I returned to Karachi it appeared that he had made his mind up. Mir Balakh Sher contacted me on the telephone and informed me that he and the tribe had decided that I was to be their chosen candidate from the National Assembly seat from Rojhan. I received a number of phone calls, both from him and, on occasion, from his close friend, and my brother-in-law, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti. Finally I yielded to family pressure and gave in by agreeing to stand from Rojhan and contest the Rajanpur seat.

On 7 October, I was invited to tea by Nusrat Bhutto. When I met the Bhutto ladies I informed them of my late decision to contest the elections from Rojhan and mentioned to them about the pressure that had been applied on me by my brother. Benazir Bhutto expressed her extreme disappointment and mentioned that it was now impossibly late for her to withdraw the PPP ticket that had been awarded to Ashiq. Nusrat Bhutto became somewhat emotional and said that it was all a terrible mistake. They were keen that I rescind my recent decision and stand from the Kandkot-Kashmor seat as I had earlier planned. But having given a commitment to my brother, I told them, I would have to stand by it.

On 12 October I began the 1988 election campaign from Jacobabad district. I spent the day in the Kandkot constituency thanking all those who had pledged to support me and to rally support for a local NDP provincial candidate. That evening, at Jacobabad, I received a phone call from Farooq Leghari, who as my diary records, was 'pleading on Benazir's behalf to (get me to) contest from the Kandkot seat'.⁸⁰⁶ Despite the efforts of all the NDP party members present there, who were still very keen for me to contest from Kashmor Kandkot, I once more declined Benazir's appeal. I told Farooq Leghari to convey my appreciation to his leader for her apparent concern for me.

I arrived at Rojhan late in the evening of 13 October 1988. The next day I met my brother, Mir Balakh Sher, who, according to my diary entry for the day, was very 'very enthusiastic about my campaign'.⁸⁰⁷ The next day we departed separately for Rajanpur for the filing of my election papers. There to my astonishment my brother filed his, as well as, Nasrullah Dirshak's nomination papers (both on IJI tickets), along with mine. Our relations suddenly became ice-cold. I was to subsequently discover that the previous night my brother's political associate Nasrullah Drishak, a caretaker provincial

⁸⁰⁶ Diary Entry: 12 October 1988.

⁸⁰⁷ Diary Entry: 14 October 1988.

minister, had telephoned him from Lahore and informed him about the formation of IJI. Drishak had advised him that instructions had been issued in Islamabad requiring all candidates to join the new alliance to oppose the PPP. All this was unknown to me the following morning as we filed our nomination papers. It was then that I received a strange offer: If I joined the IJI, the other two nomination papers would immediately be withdrawn. The idea of joining a government-cum ISI sponsored alliance was an anathema to me. A line had unexpectedly been drawn and it now appeared that a bitter contest lay ahead.

In the District a tussle now commenced between the PPP and the government sponsored IJI. The government's candidate, Nasrullah Drishak, had the full backing of the district administration and had a free supply of all official resources. The PPP candidate Ashiq Mazari, since his retirement from the bureaucracy had transformed himself into an extremely wealthy businessman and was pouring crores of rupees into his election campaign. The chances of my success were now negligible. I was left with two options. Either I retired from the fray or pursued retribution for the last-minute breach of faith, by ensuring Nasrullah Drishak's defeat. My nature being what it was, I opted to fight simply to defeat the government-sponsored candidate.

The month leading up to the elections was something I would care to forget. It was a time made of painful memories. I campaigned alone with the support of just my sons. The Mazari tribesmen proved to be my only true and trusty supporters, but a large number of them, lacking national identity cards, were unable to cast their vote. Despite my brother and the rest of the family members actively canvassing against me, I won a commanding majority of the vote in the Mazari Tuman. I felt proud of that achievement. Outside the Mazari area I had held little hope as the two district groupings were engaged in their traditional district power tussle. In the end I lost by an expected large margin, having received few votes in the populous urban centres of Rajanpur township and Kot Mithan.⁸⁰⁸ But I achieved what I had angrily sought, which was the defeat of Nasrullah Drishak. Subsequently I also ensured the defeat of the government-sponsored candidate for the provincial assembly who happened to be a nephew of mine. I then returned to Karachi and announced my resignation as president of the NDP and my decision to completely retire from politics.

I then realized that I had come a full circle. The journey, that I had started so long ago, full of hopes and high aspirations, had ended in disillusionment.

⁸⁰⁸ Qazi Hussain Ahmed's self-made promise to 'support me unreservedly' proved to be pure fiction. Despite Professor Ghafoor Ahmed's attempts, Qazi Hussain Ahmed and his party instructed their followers in the urban areas of Rajanpur and Mithankot not to vote for me but instead for the IJI candidate.

Epilogue

The result of the 1988 election failed to provide a majority party in the National Assembly. The PPP succeeded in obtaining 92 out of a total of 215 contested seats. In contrast, the IJI received only 54. It is widely believed that the Acting President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the ISI,⁸⁰⁹ who were considered to be the joint-creators of the IJI, had planned to install Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi as the new Prime Minister. Their hopes had been shattered by the defeat of Jatoi in his home constituency. Reluctant to hand over power to Benazir Bhutto, the power brokers of Islamabad procrastinated for three weeks before giving in to reality. Even then, unknown at the time to most people, they did so by extracting concessions from Benazir Bhutto, which greatly circumscribed her prime ministerial authority. Matters such as Defence and the Afghanistan policy were to remain outside her orbit of control. Ghulam Ishaq Khan also ensured that the finance policy stayed within the direction of his chosen official. More importantly, the Acting President obtained a firm commitment from Benazir Bhutto that she would ensure his election as President.

I was invited by Ghulam Ishaq Khan to attend Benazir Bhutto's swearing-in as Prime Minister. Benazir had also personally asked me to attend. After many years of playing a role in the struggle for democracy I believed that a new chapter had begun in our political history. On 2 December 1988 we witnessed a democratically elected prime minister finally being sworn into office. After many decades of hope it was a special moment of happiness for me. The next morning as I was getting ready to catch an early flight back to Karachi, I received a telephone call from Naseerullah Babar saying that Benazir Bhutto urgently wanted to meet with me at 10 a.m. that day. I arrived at the Prime Minister's Secretariat to find a long line of ministerial aspirants seated in the waiting room.⁸¹⁰

When I met Benazir Bhutto she surprised me by insisting that I join her Cabinet. I refused but thanked her for the offer. She remained adamant. Finally I told her that as I was not a member of Parliament it was inconceivable for me to join any Cabinet. Then she told me that she deeply regretted putting up a PPP candidate against me during the elections, and insisted that the matter could easily be rectified by getting me elected to the Senate. But I continued to demur. Before I left she asked me to reconsider my decision and insisted that I contact her the following week. During my meeting I found Benazir Bhutto to be bitter about the election results. She was convinced that General

⁸⁰⁹ Professor Ziring points out that by now General Hamid Gul 'had developed the ISI into a formidable institution that was relatively free of the Army Chief, General Mirza Aslam Baig's authority': Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, op. cit., p. 517.

⁸¹⁰ The waiting number included, as I recall from my diary entry, Aitiza Ahsan, Farooq Leghari, Tikka Khan, Naseerullah Babar and Rao Rashid among others.

Hamid Gul and his ISI had willfully manipulated the elections in line with their secret objectives. Not only did she believe that she had been deprived of a majority in the National Assembly, but she was also of the opinion that through tampering of the election results in Punjab, the key province had deliberately been placed beyond her political control. Expressing a determined resolve to rectify the situation in her favor, she told me that she would be taking firm steps to prevent Nawaz Sharif from becoming the chief minister of Punjab. Farooq Leghari had been assigned the task of wresting Punjab from the Muslim League by trying to cobble together a majority in the provincial parliament.

Later, upon my return to Karachi, when I related the offer Benazir Bhutto had made to me, to my family and friends, many felt that I should reconsider. A significant number of them believed that with my lengthy commitment to democracy I could play a useful advisory role in helping guide the new democratic government over the initial period, but I remained reluctant. Finally I wrote to Benazir Bhutto thanking her for her offer without making any commitment. Over the next few months I received a number of Benazir Bhutto's emissaries bringing her messages to me. She wanted me to accept the position of Chairman of a proposed Human Rights Commission, with the rank of a federal cabinet minister. I declined the offer and instead suggested the name of the retired Supreme Court judge, Justice Dorab Patel, a man with impeccable credentials for the position. My advice was not taken.

A large section of the country was euphoric with the advent of democracy and the arrival of an 'educated' and 'sophisticated' new leader. Unfortunately within months we were to experience severe disappointment when it became obvious that Benazir refused to adopt democratic practices and had succumbed to autocratic tendencies.

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Nawaz Sharif, until then, had little to do with national politics. Coming from a minor business family in Lahore, he had entered political affairs in 1982 when he was appointed a provincial minister by the martial law regime. Favored by General Jilani, then Governor of Punjab, Nawaz Sharif rose to become the province's Chief Minister. Starting with only a seventh-share in a family-owned steel foundry, the Sharif family's business fortunes prospered at an electrifying speed and it soon became one of the wealthiest in the country. As Dawn's weekly columnist, Ardeshir Cowasjee, commented ... in the first place the Sharif family would not have been able to borrow even five percent of what they did borrow had Nawaz Sharif not been firstly finance minister of Punjab, then its chief minister, and finally prime minister of the country, in all of which positions he misused his powers to borrow what was borrowed, to amass what was earned, and to issue SROs [government regulatory orders] for the particular benefit of his family's businesses.⁸¹¹

⁸¹¹ *Dawn*, 3 January 1999, ('End of Story' by Ardeshir Cowasjee).

General Zia's long period of rule began a binge of crony capitalism that would eventually lead to the creation of vast sums of newly created wealth among a handful of families. It helped destroy Pakistan's banking system and later its economy. Unlike Benazir, Nawaz Sharif had little chance to acquire an understanding of the nature of democracy. At a relatively youthful age he had obtained power as a provincial minister and grew accustomed to using it. While Benazir knowingly flouted virtually every precept of democracy, Nawaz Sharif knew little about them. In the ensuing struggle between the rivals, political principles were cast aside. The apogee was probably reached in late 1989 when a motion for a vote of no-confidence was filed against the PPP government in the National Assembly. As Professor Ziring vividly wrote:

It was said that never in the history of Pakistan had there been so much trading and purchasing of party loyalties. Millions of rupees were reported changing hands in the maneuver, and when government overtures sought to win back the defecting members, the more 'vulnerable' were placed in what were described as safe houses, and police escorts were arranged to ferry MNAs between their place of refuge and the Assembly in Islamabad.⁸¹²

Over the intervening years both Nawaz Sharif and Benazir have had two stints each as Prime Minister. While they may dispute it, their approach to wielding power has inherently been the same. Both of them have sought to enhance their personal powers while displaying undisguised hostility towards other institutions. Whether it was the office of the President, the Supreme Court, the Press or the Army, nothing was spared to whittle away their influence, viewed as they were as rival sources of power. Fortunately while the Press, through its own resilience, still manages to retain a large degree of freedom, its future continues to be worrisome. One tragic result of this pursuit of unfettered power was unbridled corruption. As politics were based solely upon personal allegiances to party leaderships, corruption remained totally unchecked. With little fear of retribution, corruption entered every sphere of the national infrastructure leading to a virtual collapse of state institutions. The enrichment of a few has left many tens of millions of citizens in a state of wretched despair, crushing poverty and crippling illiteracy.

To my mind there have been three notable events that dictated the course of our fractured political history. The first occurred in October 1954 when Chief Justice Munir connived with Governor General Ghulam Muhammad and overrode the sovereign authority of the Constituent Assembly. Used to the 'steel frame' of the British colonial civil service, both men were of the opinion that 'it was not democracy but efficiency in government, as they had experienced under the autocracy of British India, that was the

⁸¹² Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, op. cit., p. 519. Also, a member of the National Assembly representing the minorities told me that he was one of those instrumental in distributing cash on behalf of the government.

goal of good government'.⁸¹³ The dismissal of the Assembly led to a lengthy seventeen year dictatorial rule by bureaucrats and generals, which was finally ended by the tragedy of East Pakistan. The pre-eminent responsibility for this debacle lay with these autocrats who had persistently denied the East Pakistanis their democratic majority rights.

The second event was brought on by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto himself. Faced with a shattered remnant of a country he was given a remarkable opportunity to set it on the right track. Instead, in an obsessive quest to attain total and absolute power, he destroyed its national institutions and made a mockery of the rule of law by engaging in brutal political victimization of his political opponents and creating a rule of terror in Balochistan. His actions would ultimately lead to creating a political chaos that would allow the Army to once more seize the reins of power. The responsibility for the twelve draconian years of Zia's rule can quite properly be laid at Bhutto's doorstep.

The final event was Benazir Bhutto's refusal to abide by democratic principles once she became prime minister in 1988. Despite her insistence that the election results had been manipulated, she did however, opt to accept the restrictions imposed upon her by the Islamabad's ruling establishment as a condition of attaining the office.⁸¹⁴ Then, rather than accepting the reality and coming to terms with Nawaz Sharif, she elected to destroy him politically. Left with little option, Nawaz Sharif met her head-on in a vicious struggle for political survival. Having thrown the basic principles of democracy to the wind, Benazir Bhutto succeeded in engendering a legacy of political hatred that terminally weakened the give-and-take nature of democratic politics. Her actions led to a state of political intolerance and mutual loathing which bedevil our body politic to this very day.

Sadly, in recent times Pakistan has been described by some foreign observers as a failed nation state. While this is clearly disputable, nevertheless, the fact that our country is viewed by some to have been a failure, is in itself a damaging reality. Who would have

⁸¹³ Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, op. cit., p. 190.

⁸¹⁴ On 27 June 1990 I had a meeting with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan at his request at the Presidency in Islamabad. At the meeting he told me about his total disenchantment with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. In a nutshell, he said to me:

Benazir hasn't kept to the commitments she made to me when I agreed to her becoming the Prime Minister. And, every time I remind her of the shortcomings of her government she begins weeping in my presence. My patience has sorely tested and now I am seriously contemplating dismissing the government.

He then asked for my advice. I made it clear to him that, as I was not privy to the innermost details of the functioning of Benazir's government I could not comment on its possible dismissal. But if Ghulam Ishaq Khan was determined to pursue his suggested course of action then it must be 'in total accordance with the 1973 Constitution'. When asked to suggest names for the composition of a future caretaker government, I replied he should choose a small number of 'competent, hardworking and honest people'. Ghulam Ishaq Khan's reply was memorable. He said, 'Tell me where can I find such angels in Pakistan?'

thought in 1947, as many of us stood proudly watching our new national flag fluttering in the breeze, that fifty years later we would stoop so low in the eyes of the world. Today Pakistan is widely known for its dishonest leadership, religious intolerance and widespread violence. Within Pakistan we suffer from endemic corruption, an absence of the rule of law, lack of civic facilities, a disintegrating educational system, a severe shortage of medical facilities, rampant unemployment and a near collapse in law and order.

There is a much-quoted story of Mr. Jinnah. He was said to enjoy his Sunday drives in the company of his sister, Miss Fatima Jinnah. During one of these weekly excursions, his chauffeur decided to break a red traffic light because of the lack of traffic only to find himself being severely admonished by Mr. Jinnah. No one is above the law, Mr. Jinnah is said to have told him, least of all the Governor-General as he has an example to set to others. Unfortunately Mr. Jinnah's lesson fell on deaf ears.

Observance of the rule of law serves as a basic foundation of any modern civilized nation state. Even some of the most powerful men in the world, have found that even their exalted position offers little defence when they transgress the laws of their country. Unfortunately in the case of Pakistan the situation has historically been quite the reverse.

As early as the 1950s, unprincipled politicians realized that they could indulge in crimes such as political kidnappings and other nefarious activities, without fear of retribution, provided of course that their services were in demand by the government of the day.⁸¹⁵ In Sindh, when Chief Minister Khuro was charged with a crime, he found himself pardoned the moment Ghulam Muhammad decided to use his services against a recalcitrant Constituent Assembly. By Ayub Khan's time the rule of law was regularly tested and often found wanting. One needs to look no further than the activities of the presidential family of those days. His son Gohar Ayub's open defiance of the Section 144 imposed in Karachi at the time of the 1965 election, when he led a victory procession through the opposition belt in Karachi caused a night of mayhem and resulted in an official death toll of twenty, but led to no censure. Even Gohar Ayub's elevation from the position of a retired army captain to the rank of a leading magnate with an estimated wealth of US \$4 million had the blessings of his father. And yet Ayub Khan was the same man who forced his way to power at gun-point with the avowed aim of eradicating the corrupt 'sharks and leeches'.⁸¹⁶ Clearly, the law was no longer applicable to those in power. It had been sacrificed at the altar of personal self-interest. These autocrats were setting examples for others to follow.

⁸¹⁵ On one occasion the chief minister of Sindh, Khuro, had the Speaker the Sindh Assembly, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, kidnapped. He was subsequently released in an isolated region of Thar near Mithi.

⁸¹⁶ Ayub Khan, *Speeches and Statements*, Pakistan Publications, Karachi, Vol. 1, p. 4.

During Bhutto's days the rule of law underwent a drastic rewrite. Now it became permissible to circumvent the law to oppress political opponents. Bhutto, as the then Chief Minister of Sindh, Jatoi's subsequent confession corroborated,⁸¹⁷ often resorted to ordering the killing of his opponents. The law had become a prerogative of the powerful and could be used at will to justify any extreme. When senior officials of the PPP began indulging in open corruption, reports of their activities were quick to reach Bhutto. He chose to use the information to ridicule the perpetrators and keep them in their place. There were no prosecutions. Bhutto, himself, was subject to charges of corruption. A US investigation of PIA's purchase of DC 10 aircrafts stated that 'prosecutors uncovered evidence that senior executives [of McDonnell Douglas Corporation] had paid bribes to a relative of former Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto... The bribes amounted to [US] \$500,000 for each aircraft purchased by Pakistan's national airline'.⁸¹⁸ Persistent rumors over the years also maintain that Bhutto pocketed a large portion of the millions of dollars that Libya donated as earthquake relief funds for victims in the northern areas in the early 1970s. Undeniably, after Bhutto's execution, his family could neither have maintained their lifestyle nor their various residences in London, Avignon, Cannes and Damascus, Karachi and Larkana simply from the income derived from their small farm landholdings in Sindh.

Zia's twelve years of power greatly exacerbated the issue. Insecure as he was, he turned a blind eye to all those who exhibited personal loyalty towards him. During his time corruption became common among those who held senior positions within the government. Ministers, bureaucrats, loyal politicians, businessmen and even senior military officers began enriching themselves often at the expense of the national exchequer. These crimes were forgivable provided the perpetrator or his family had access to Zia. In one well-known incident Zia personally interceded with President Reagan to get a presidential pardon for a diplomat son-in-law of one of his senior officials who had been caught smuggling drugs into the US. Zia was hardly in a position to condemn the acquiring of ill-gotten wealth considering the fact that he was said upon his death to have left a sum of US \$250 million behind for his family. His closest colleague General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, in the words of his own son, left even a greater fortune in dollars for his family to enjoy. Self-interest and self-preservation were the twin catch-calls of the legacy Zia left for his political heirs.

Even President Ghulam, Ishaq Khan, who had supposedly enjoyed a blameless reputation as a bureaucrat, let his personal agenda override the narrow constraints of lawful authority. In 1990 aiming to enfeeble Benazir in Sindh, Ghulam Ishaq appointed Jam Sadiq, a man charged with, and widely believed to be responsible for the murder of six men. At the same time he appointed Ghulam Mustafa Khar, the only politician known to have criminally collaborated with an enemy power, a Federal Minister,

⁸¹⁷ Footnote, Diary entry: 30 July 1986.

⁸¹⁸ Excerpt from: Douglas Frantz and David McKean, *Friends in High Places. The Rise and Fall of Clark Clifford*, Little Brown and Company, New York. 1995, (cited in Dawn, 3 January 1999, 'End of Story' by Ardeshir Cowasjee).

simply to weaken the PPP in Punjab. Clearly, the rule of law held little significance when political vendettas were involved. Ghulam Ishaq Khan damaged himself even further by exonerating his sons-in-law from their criminal activities. On one occasion the local Corps Commander, General Bangash, visited me at my house bringing a file with him. The file contained what the General referred to as incontrovertible evidence against Irfanullah Marwat for a host of crimes, including a charge relating to a sordid act of rape. Sometime later General Bangash told me that he had sent the evidence directly to President Ghulam Ishaq Khan after consulting Army Chief, General Asif Nawaz. Marwat's father-in-law. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, received the file and then ensured that nothing ever came out of these charges documented against his son-in-law. Once again self-interest and self-preservation prevailed.

Despite their aversion to each other there is little that distinguishes Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto when it comes to upholding the rule of law. It is a case of tweedledum and tweedledee. At times it becomes an inescapable fact that both view the country as their personal domain with the spoils there waiting for the taking. It is almost as if they were rival claimants to 'the throne' of Pakistan, with their battle for 'regal' supremacy being waged at every election. That, it would appear, is their only visible concession to the notion of democracy-contesting the elections.

There have been copious reports in both local and foreign newspapers of the vast bank accounts and properties held overseas by Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif and their families.⁸¹⁹ Election time brings with it regular vows of accountability, but all the processes of 'accountability' have proved to be one-sided and largely ineffectual. There is little hope, given the known propensities of both leaders, that we can expect any change in the future.

* * *

In Pakistan's fifty-one year history, the country has been ruled for twenty-nine years by either the military or the bureaucracy. We had seven initial years of democracy in which we saw politicians struggle amongst each other for ascendancy. Initially it began as a struggle between the federalist Liaquat Ali Khan and the Punjabi politicians such as Mumtaz Daultana. Later it turned into a conflict over the competing interests of East Bengal and Punjab. In 1954 the bureaucracy had assumed control of the country under Ghulam Muhammad and later Iskander Mirza. In 1958 it was the turn of the army generals. Until December 1971 Pakistan remained in the powerful grip of its military leaders, aided and abetted throughout by the bureaucracy.

⁸¹⁹ Benazir Bhutto's spectacular wealth is reported to have been amassed by raking in vast commissions from any project or business that she and her husband, Asif Zardari, could lay their hands on. Using techniques borrowed from the Sharif family, Asif Zardari is reputed to have raised large loans from nationalized banks in the names of front men. This money is said to have been invested in businesses and properties, including several sugar mills.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was himself a creation of martial law. When I knew him in the 1950s he was trying desperately to become elected as a member of the Sindh provincial assembly, but the odds appeared to be against him. It was only by seeking favor from Iskander Mirza and later from General Ayub Khan that he emerged on the national political scene. He had learnt his politics under the tutelage of an autocratic rule. When Bhutto came to power he eschewed his little practiced democratic principles in favor of all that he had learnt as a minister under the army-bureaucracy rule of Ayub Khan.

During the twelve years of General Zia, Pakistan once more came under the firm grip of an Army general who relied upon the bureaucracy to maintain his rule. Even during Benazir Bhutto's initial stint in power after 1988, the bureaucracy led by Ghulam Ishaq Khan proved reluctant to yield power. Nawaz, Sharif, like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was also a creation of martial law. Unlike Bhutto he did not turn against his mentors but relied upon them to defend him. Not since 1977 has an election been as heavily rigged as the one that took place in 1990 which brought Nawaz Sharif into power. It was only when he wished to attain more personal power that he struck out against his erstwhile mentors, which ended in his sacking by Ghulam Ishaq Khan in 1993.

Throughout the history of Pakistan the generals and the bureaucracy, with the timid acquiescence of self serving politicians, have largely been the unfortunate cause of the disintegration of the system. Inheriting an imperial colonial system of administration, the bureaucracy has jealously guarded its prerogatives and has consistently hoarded its colonial legacy. It has actively aided and abetted every dictatorial ruler probably in the belief that autocratic rule serves only to further the interests of the civil service. The blame for the state of the country after half a century of existence weighs heavily upon them.

Over the years the politicians have much to answer for as well. Mired in politics of self-interest, the greater national interest has seemed to have largely escaped them. Instead of national issues they have concentrated on personalities, provincialism, and obscurantism. Many of them have enriched themselves through selling jobs, illegally acquiring urban property at throwaway rates and obtaining bank loans without any intention of repayment. Historically a large proportion of politicians belong to rural landed families, popularly known as 'the feudals'. These people, being products of district rivalries, are more interested in enhancing or preserving their local power bases rather than seeking any improvements in national welfare. Consequently, they have eagerly supported whoever happened to be in power in Islamabad rapidly switching loyalties when the need arose. In their devotion to power they have rendered little or no service to the country.

Last, but not the least, is the tragic state of our senior judiciary. Ever since Chief Justice Munir's voluntary capitulation to the government in 1954, the judiciary has rarely displayed the independence that is vital for the functioning of a just society. Constant

government meddling in the selection and promotion of superior court judges has undermined this most important of institutions. It is a sad reflection that when our Supreme Court was publicly humiliated by an officially sponsored mob attack on its premises on 28 October 1997, after eighteen long months the court acquitted everyone despite strong evidence to the contrary. In 1997 we also had to suffer a public spat among Supreme Court judges in the national Press as they warred amongst each other over the issue of judicial seniority. Undoubtedly, it severely undermined the prestige of that eminent institution. While at the same time the pathetic state of the High Courts can perhaps be best summed up by the following report printed in a local magazine:

It is hard to decide what is worse, a lawyer telling a High Court judge that dogs would devour his corpse or the judge snapping back and calling him 'that' dog? This is exactly what happened on October 13th [1998] in the court of Mr. Justice Ehsanul Haq of [the] Lahore High Court... What does it take for two small-time lawyers to disrupt the proceedings of a double bench of a high court and abuse the hell out of the senior judge? A discredited judiciary appears to be the only plausible reason. The erosion of authority and respectability of the judiciary, which began in the 1950s, has started to tell. Who is responsible?⁸²⁰

* * *

Pakistanis deserve better than the crises that are regularly inflicted upon them. The people of Pakistan cry out for honesty and integrity. Today they seem to have lost all hope of a better future. With a hundred and forty million people mired in poverty and illiteracy it is difficult to see how the issue can be resolved quickly. Looking for a messiah to save us is not the answer, but an exercise in wishful thinking. While we need to rein in the viceregal pretensions of our political leadership, we must work towards a future where the rule of law exists. No person should ever again deem himself to be above the law of the land. To attain that goal we need a truly independent judiciary which is selected solely on the basis of integrity and merit, and not on political patronage.

We must once more examine whether the Westminster parliamentary system is appropriate for our national level of education and refinement. Pakistan clearly lacks the centuries of traditions and practices that resolutely obstruct any chance occurrence of dictatorial tendencies in a British prime minister. A rampant Pakistani prime minister, with a subservient majority in parliament disallowing any constitutional safeguards to check him, only provides for an intimidatory government. At best, such a scenario, leads to weak one-man governance. As a noteworthy commentator observed, 'Viceregalism can preserve Pakistan, but it will not sustain it'.⁸²¹ Perhaps a variation of

⁸²⁰ *The Tribune*, 25-31 October 1998. Karachi ('A Crisis of Credibility' by Muhammad Malick and Mubashir Zaidi).

⁸²¹ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, op. cit., p. 614

the French and the US constitutional models, which provide for the necessary checks and balances, could prove to be more suitable for our people.

The other vital aspect of any successful nation state is a healthy economy. A good economy means more than a handful of rich politicians, bureaucrats, industrialists and textile barons. To attain this local banks must be privatized. While this will unfortunately engender unemployment in the short-term, the banks will no longer be captive to the whims of influential politicians and avaricious business groups. Needless to add, public corporations, which have been brought to their knees by mismanagement, political nepotism, over-staffing and chronic inefficiency, also need to be privatized. It will be a painful process but the country can ill-afford the drain on our limited resources if they are not.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the future of a country always rests with the coming generations. Our educational sector has been abysmally neglected. No nation can ever hope to succeed with tens of millions of impoverished illiterates. Rather than squander what little remains of our national wealth on grandiose projects, such as motorways and airports, it is vital that it be expended on providing decent education for all. While the present generation suffers the iniquities of the past and present, we should endeavor to ensure that Pakistanis of the future are better placed than we ever were. We must never forget that a country is held in trust for the generations that are to follow, for it rightly belongs to them.

Glossary

<i>Ahle Kitab</i>	'The people of the Book'. A term used in the Koran for believers in a revealed religion.
<i>Amanat</i>	An object held in trust. Also, applies to women and children held under one's protection.
<i>Awami</i>	Relating to or belonging to the <i>awam</i> or the people.
<i>Azaan</i>	The call to prayer proclaimed by the muezzin of a mosque.
<i>Badshah</i>	A sovereign ruler or king.
<i>Balochiyat</i>	The Baloch culture and its tribal traditions.
<i>Baniya</i>	A Hindu trader or moneylender. Originally <i>baniya</i> was the name of a Hindu trading caste.
<i>Beghairat</i>	A pejorative term. Literally means 'devoid of honour'.
<i>Bhainjee</i>	An Urdu term of respect for an elder sister. <i>Bhain</i> (sister) and its lesser-used variation, <i>bhainjee</i> , are commonly used as a polite form of address to women.
<i>Biradari</i>	Literally 'a brotherhood'. Generally used to refer to a caste, community or a patrilineal kinship group. More commonly used in Punjab.
<i>Bolak</i>	An ancient Baloch term for a tribe of the Baloch race.
<i>Budhi</i>	A pejorative term for an old woman.
<i>Chaikhana</i>	A rural or roadside tea-house (a traditional rural gathering place).
<i>Cholo</i>	A long baggy white shirt traditionally worn by the Baloch.
<i>Dupatta</i>	A long scarf worn by women.

<i>Durbari</i>	Relating to a durbar (a ruler or governor's court) and traditionally used to refer to those who would regularly collect there. Now commonly used as a politically derisive term for sycophants or yes-men.
<i>Farman</i>	Historically, royal summons.
<i>Fateha</i>	Funeral prayer.
<i>Gaddha</i>	A donkey, an ass, and also used in a derogatory way for a stupid person.
<i>Geydan</i>	A simple tribal dwelling made from the plaited leaves of a particular desert plant.
<i>Gherao</i>	Encirclement, also a form of political or labour protest in which a particular building (or buildings) is surrounded by besieging agitators.
<i>Goondas</i>	Hired thugs or hooligans.
<i>Hari</i>	A Sindhi bonded agricultural worker.
<i>Hartal</i>	A strike.
<i>Hujra</i>	Segregated male lodgings in traditional residences.
<i>Ifiar</i>	The time for breaking a fast during Ramzan.
<i>Jagir</i>	Land bestowed by a ruler, in most cases by the British.
<i>Jawan</i>	Young man, a private in the army.
<i>Jhoot</i>	A lie.
<i>Jiyeh</i>	'Long live'.
<i>Juth</i>	Among the Baloch, a general term for people of non-Baloch extraction.
<i>Kaffir</i>	A non-believer. Broadly speaking, someone who does not acknowledge the oneness of God, though its interpretation can be more restrictive. Kalima The basic creed of Islam, which is recited by all Muslims.
<i>Kameez</i>	Shirt.
<i>Karaiz</i>	An underground irrigation system of Persian origin.

<i>Khaddar</i>	Handloom cloth.
<i>Khalifa</i>	The leader of all Muslims. The term is used in Sindh for an assistant of the Pir or religious leader.
<i>Kilim</i>	A tribal rug.
<i>Killadar</i>	The officer in charge of a fort.
<i>Kuicha</i>	Temporary.
<i>Kutchra Ilaka</i>	Land subject to seasonal river flooding.
<i>Lathi</i>	A steel-tipped cane carried by police.
<i>Lota</i>	A water container used for ablutions. Now also a terra of contempt for politicians who regularly switch political loyalties for rich rewards.
<i>Lungar</i>	A free supply of food.
<i>Madrassah</i>	A religious school.
<i>Maghrib</i>	West, also the prayer held after the sun has set in the west, as well as the time of that prayer (i.e., sunset).
<i>Mahal</i>	A palace or large mansion. Also used to be a territorial unit in the rural area for revenue collecting purposes.
<i>Mahaldar</i>	A revenue controller for a territorial unit.
<i>Maidan</i>	An open ground.
<i>Mal-e-Ghanimat</i>	After conquering a country, under Islam, it is deemed lawful to take possession of movable property (<i>mal-e-ghanimat</i>) of non-Muslim enemies for division among the troops. One-fifth between relief for orphans, feeding of the poor and welfare of travellers.
<i>Malik</i>	A village headman among the tribal Pathans. A title inferior in rank to that of Khan or clan chieftain.
<i>Mama</i>	A maternal uncle.

<i>Mazar</i>	Commonly a mausoleum, but in Balochi, a lion. Mir , A Baloch title derived from the Arabic Amir (ruler or prince). In some tribes (such as the Mazaris), the paramount chief.
<i>Mirri</i>	The Mir's court house.
<i>Mohib-e-Watan</i>	A patriot.
<i>Mothabar</i>	A tribal notable in Balochi, otherwise an elder or a sage.
<i>Mujjahdeen</i>	An Islamic warrior.
<i>Mukhtiarkar</i>	Revenue official in charge of a sub-District in Sindh (equivalent of a Tehsildar).
<i>Mukkadam</i>	A Baloch clan chieftain.
<i>Munshi</i>	An accountant to rural gentry, in cities it refers to a clerk.
<i>Murdabad</i>	'Death to' (a person, etc.).
<i>Mureed</i>	A devout follower of a Pir.
<i>Namaz</i>	Islamic prayer.
<i>Nath</i>	A nose-ring worn by women. The term was used for the women police force, raised by Bhutto, to lathi-charge women protesters.
<i>Nikah</i>	Islamic wedding contract, the wedding ceremony.
<i>Paiya jaam</i>	A general strike, blocking all vehicular movement.
<i>Patwari</i>	A rural revenue officer of junior most rank.
<i>Pukkah</i>	Proper, permanent (as opposed to Kutcha).
<i>Sakhi</i>	A generous open-handed humanitarian.
<i>Salaam</i>	'Peace', an abridgement of the Islamic greeting A ' <i>Salaamu Alaikum</i> (Peace be upon you).
<i>Sarbara</i>	The leader and, at times, when a title cannot properly be assumed, a regent.

<i>Sarri</i>	The Baloch word for a dupatta (a long scarf worn on the head by women).
<i>Shalwar</i>	The baggy trousers worn by most Pakistanis today (of Central Asian origin and native dress of the Baloch; Pathan and other historical migrant races from the western borders of the subcontinent).
<i>Sherwani</i>	A fully-buttoned knee-length coat, with a tight-fitting collar adapted from European military tunics, which for the past hundred years has come to serve as the formal dress of most Muslims in the subcontinent. Buttons were also a western introduction.
<i>Shikar</i>	Hunting of wild game.
<i>Shikari</i>	A hunter, also a Sindhi scheduled caste that once used to depend upon snaring wild animals for subsistence.
<i>Sikha Shahi</i>	Originally referred to the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab under Ranjit Singh and his sons, but later became synonymous with any repressive regime.
<i>Siyal</i>	A Baloch implying outer boundaries of kinship. Within a tribe a clan would consider other clans as <i>siyals</i> , but in the larger tribal context each tribe would consider another Baloch tribe to be their <i>siyals</i> . The word implies a degree of 'social equality' as well. A Sirdar of a tribe would only consider Sirdars of other tribes to be his <i>siyals</i> .
<i>Siyali</i>	A tribal concept of self-esteem, or pride, when dealing with <i>Siyals</i> .
<i>Syah Kari</i>	Literally 'a Black act' in Balochi. A term for adultery. More recently the word has been adopted in Sindh as <i>Karo Kari</i> .
<i>Subedar</i>	Historically a governor of a province (<i>subah</i>), later this title was belittled by the British who used it in their Indian Army for a 'native' noncommissioned officer of the rank of a sergeant.
<i>Tehsil</i>	A sub-district.
<i>Tehsildar</i>	A revenue officer in charge of a sub-district. Thana A police station.
<i>Thanaydar</i>	The policeman in charge of a police station, often also referred to as an SHO (Station House Officer); usually of the rank of an Inspector.

<i>Topkhana</i>	Literally 'Cannon House'. The Topkhana at Lahore was the headquarters of the Sikh artillery.
<i>Tuman</i>	The area in which a large Baloch tribe is settled.
<i>Tumandar</i>	The paramount chief of any major Baloch tribe. Originally from the Central Asian (Mongol) term for the leader of ten thousand horsemen or <i>Tuman</i> .
<i>Wadera</i>	Among the Baloch a clan chieftain (along with <i>Mukkadum</i>). It was adapted from the Seraiki and Sindhi word for village headman.
<i>Zamindar</i>	Until recently it meant a member of the landed gentry, now it is more commonly applied.
<i>Zananah</i>	Segregated lodgings for women in traditional residences.
<i>Zindabad</i>	'Long live!'